

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 168 WEST 23D STREET, NEW YORK

No. 956.

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 27, 1916.

Price 5 Cents.

WORTH-A-MILLION: OR A BOY'S FIGHT FOR JUSTICE.

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY ALLYN DRAPER.



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CHAPTER I:

DRIVEN FROM HOME.

"Here, you lazy young hound, go down to the post-office and mail these letters, and be quick about it, or I'll find a way to make you!"

"I'm neither a young hound nor lazy, Mr. Rutherford, and it is not my place to run errands."

"It isn't, eh? It's your business to do as I say. There are the letters. Now be off with them!"

The speaker, a man of middle age, and of a stern and forbidding cast of countenance, threw a number of letters he held in his hand upon the floor in front of the handsome young fellow whom he had addressed in such brutal terms.

"If you had chosen to ask me in a gentlemanly way to mail your letters for you," said the young man, "I would not mind it; but—"

"No more talk!" growled the other. "Pick 'em up and mail 'em."

"I will not!" and the boy turned on his heel and left the room, which was an elegantly appointed office in a private banking house downtown, in the city of New York.

Alfred Thorpe was a boy of eighteen, intelligent, obliging, easily influenced by kindness, but as stubborn as a mule under harsh treatment, frank, loving and tender-hearted, but possessing considerable firmness withal, and as true as steel.

His father had been dead about two years when our story opens, his mother having been married again, and to a Mr. Rutherford, some six months previous.

Mr. Thorpe had left his widow in very good circumstances, with a house and a considerable piece of ground, just out from the city, everything having been settled upon her, though it was well understood that she would look out for the interests of her two children, Alfred and Daisy.

At the time of his father's death, Alf was away at boarding school, whence he was summoned to attend the funeral, and whether he returned after this sad event.

Daisy was some five years younger, and remained at home with her mother, who conducted her education, it being thought better for Alf, however, to become accustomed to meeting all sorts of boys, to mix more in the world and strengthen his character by contact with varied natures.

Things went along smoothly enough, Alf doing well at school, and promising to develop into a fine, manly fellow, when, upon coming home, a year or more after his father's death, he found that changes were about to take place.

A Mr. Rutherford and his sister, Mrs. Adderly, were visiting his mother, and it did not take Alfred long to find out that he would soon be blessed, or the reverse, with a step-father.

He conceived a violent dislike to the visitor from the first, but was gentleman enough to treat his mother's guests with respect, if not with cordiality.

Returning to school at the end of a fortnight, he pursued his studies more vigorously than ever, determined to come out ahead of all his fellows at the end of the term.

Before it was half finished he was sent for to come home,

finding that his mother was married and that Rutherford and his sister had taken up their abode in the pleasant home just out of town.

Rutherford had gone into business on his own account as a banker, being supplied with money, it was said, by his wife, and at present, affairs seemed to be in a most prosperous condition.

Alfred was taken out of school just when he was doing his best, in order that his stepfather might make a businessman of him, it was announced; but poor Alf did not relish the change by any means.

He had no chance to go on with his studies, and his duties at the bank consisted of the veriest drudgery instead of his being given an insight into the business, as was promised.

His stepfather was stern and cruel, never gave Alf a kind or encouraging word, and was constantly complaining to the mother how lazy and shiftless her son was.

"I am sure that I always had the best reports of him while he was at school," she would say, "and I do not think he ought to have been taken away so soon."

"Nonsense! Money spent on sending boys to boarding school is money wasted. The best education a boy can get is right in a practical business house."

However true that might be, it was certain that Alf learned nothing in the bank, nor was he given a chance to do so.

He was given all the hard, dirty work to do, was hustled and badgered by his stepfather, and made to feel in many ways that evil days had come upon him.

He was constantly told that he was lazy and good for nothing, and even when he did try to do something more than running errands was interfered with and made to do something else.

He had finally managed, by hard work, to get charge of one of the ledgers and began, with the assistance of a fellow clerk, to get a real knowledge of the banking business.

Rutherford seemed determined to harass him all he could, however, and when Alf was behind in his accounts, through no fault of his own, he felt, more than ever, the wrath of his stepfather.

Six months had passed when the scene described at the beginning of the chapter took place.

Alf had been called away from his desk, thus losing time which he knew he would have to make up, only to receive his cruel tyrant's unmerited abuse.

When he turned upon his heel, after refusing to pick up the letters, Rutherford called after him, but all to no purpose.

"The young dog!" hissed the man. "I'll break his spirit yet or drive him away, which will answer my purpose as well. While he remains at hand, my power over his mother is not complete. Once he is out of the way I can work unhindered."

Suddenly he caught sight of the letters on the floor, tapped a little bell on his desk and waited the coming of the errand boy.

"Take those letters and mail them," he said, when the boy entered.

After the boy had been gone about ten minutes Mr. Rutherford went out into the counting-room and said loudly:

"Alfred, come here. I want you to go on an errand for me."

The tone implied a demand, not a request, and Alf visibly chafed at being thus treated in the presence of all his associates.

"I am engaged on some special accounts, sir, which must be finished to-day," he said, mildly. "Can't you send James?"

"James has gone out, and if he hadn't, it would make no difference. My word is law, understand! I am your father, I believe?"

The harsh tones, the brutal words, had attracted the attention of everybody in the counting-room, and even that of several customers on the other side of the counter.

Alf flushed deeply, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he restrained his rising anger.

"You married my mother," he said, quietly, "but that gave you no right to treat me like a dog."

"No more words," hissed the banker, throwing a letter on a table standing near. "Take that letter to the address given and wait for an answer."

Alf did not wish to make a scene before so many witnesses, and he therefore closed his ledger, put on his hat, dropped the letter in his pocket and went out.

The delivery of the letter and its answer lost him an hour and a half of valuable time, and when he returned he found his books just as he had left them.

In order to finish the work on hand, he was obliged to remain till nearly dark, everybody having gone and only the watchman being on the premises.

He was late to dinner, and had his meal served cold and with no one to keep him company, his mother having gone out with her husband, and Daisy being abed.

There was no comfort for him in the house, and he rode into the city, went to a theater, and returned after every one had gone to bed, to find the house locked up and his latch-key of no use.

"When will these petty annoyances cease?" he mused. "They are worse to bear than greater trials, and are slowly wearing my heart out. The tide must turn soon, for I cannot endure this misery much longer."

He finally succeeded in arousing one of the servants, who let him in, and he went off to bed, utterly miserable.

The next morning his stepfather called him into his private office, and said, in a loud voice:

"Go black my boots, Alfred, and when that is done, go after the mail."

"I am busy. Send for James," said Alf.

"No back talk, you lazy cur! You are always shirking work. Those accounts of yours are all in a muddle. The office boy could do them better."

"They were correct enough last night, for I remained here till they were balanced."

"I don't believe it. That's all humbug. You pretend to work, you hypocrite, but you spend your nights in drinking and carousing. You haven't half finished your accounts," and Rutherford pushed an open ledger in front of Alf's nose.

Sure enough, the account was incomplete, and in a very muddled shape, besides.

"Somebody has tampered with those books!" cried Alfred, angrily. "A leaf has been torn out, and the rest interfered with. They were as clear as daylight when I left them."

"Don't try to lie out of it, you cheating vagabond!" roared the banker, coarsely. "I can see through your trick. You have bungled that account purposely, so as to cover your thefts."

"Theft!" gasped Alf, turning deathly white in an instant. "I never stole a penny in all my life!"

"You lie, you graceless scoundrel! You have been stealing ever since you came here, and the proofs—"

With a fierce cry of burning indignation Alf sprang upon his tormentor, and with one blow felled him to the floor.

"Liar and coward!" he hissed, "you are as false as the fiend, your master!"

At the sound of the man's fall two of the clerks hurried in from the main office, seized Alf, and held him back, as he was about to rush upon his fallen foe.

"Call an officer!" shrieked Rutherford. "The young villain assaulted me—would have killed me had you not prevented."

"Release me!" cried Alf, struggling to free himself. "Fear not for that crawling worm on the floor; I would not soil my feet on him."

"Send for the police!" hissed Rutherford, rising and crossing the room to an elegant mahogany desk, the entire fittings

of the room being of the most costly and elaborate description. "I'll teach the brat to strike his own father!"

"You are not my father, thank heavens!" cried Alf. "Not a drop of your wolfish blood flows in my veins! My father was a gentleman!" with a cutting emphasis on the word, "while you—faugh!—I could not soil my lips with a term base enough to fit your case. Let me go, you vile toad!"

Then, shaking off the grasp of the man who held him, Alf walked over to Rutherford's desk and said fiercely, but in a low tone:

"I am going away, and shall not trouble you again. You have driven me from home, Mr. Rutherford, but when I return—beware of me!"

"H'm! Going away to make your fortune, are you?" sneered Rutherford. "I suppose you intend to come back worth a million at least?"

"Yes," muttered Alf, picking up a dainty, exquisitely carved paper knife of ivory, "I will return worth a million, and when I do. I'll crush you as I do this!"

He ground the delicate little top into fragments between his hands, hurled the pieces at Rutherford's head, and in another moment was gone.

"The first step!" hissed Rutherford, his eyes glittering with fiendish glee. "The next is easier, once this has been taken and so, step by step, I mean to rise till I reach the summit of my ambition."

CHAPTER II.

THE PRICE OF A BOY'S LIFE.

"I want a position as green hand on a vessel bound for China. Have you any open?"

"Ever been to sea before?"

"No."

"Running away, eh?"

"There is no one whose consent I need ask."

"Father dead?"

"Yes."

"Mother, too?"

"She knows of my intention."

"How's your health?"

"First rate."

"No natural defects?"

"I'm as sound as a dollar."

"What makes you go to sea? Can't you earn a living on shore?"

"I wish to go away and earn a living somewhere else. China is on the other side of the world. I can't go any farther than that."

"Can you buy your own outfit?"

"Yes."

"Well, if you're in the same mind to-morrow come and see me."

"I shall not change my resolution. Can you not settle the affair to-day? I wish to go away as soon as possible."

"Well, then, take a seat and amuse yourself the best way you can. I expect Captain Roomer in pretty soon. I heard this morning that he wanted a few hands."

"Very well; I'll wait."

Alf Thorpe was the applicant for the position of green hand on board a ship bound for China, and the scene was a shipping office on South street, in the city of New York.

After the stormy outbreak in the banker's private office, Alf had gone straight home, had informed his mother of his intentions, which no words of hers could shake, had taken leave of her and his sister Daisy, had gathered up the things he needed most, and then gone direct to the shipping office.

In an hour or so after his talk with the agent, an old, weather-beaten hulk of a man entered the office, and was introduced as Captain Boomer, of the ship Hong Kong, bound for China and the East Indies, and nearly ready for sea.

Alf stated his wishes in a few words, and the skipper regarded him critically for a few moments.

"Let me look at your hands," he presently grunted. "H'm, white, but strong and well put together. What's your weight?"

"One hundred and thirty."

"And your age?"

"Eighteen and a half."

"Are you good at figures?"

"Yes."

"Well, I like your looks. You'll learn quick, but there'll be other things I'll want you to do 'sides working ship, and I reckon you'll combine the sailor and the scoundrel, and that's what I want. How much wages?"

"Whatever is fair."

"Want any advance?"

"I think not, if you'll send some one with me to get my outfit."

"Hum! What are you going away fur?" asked Captain Boomer, suddenly.

Alf colored for an instant, and then replied:

"There is trouble at home. My stepfather is a brute, and opposes me in every way. I can do better away from home. My mother does not oppose my going, and I am not necessary to her support."

"So you asked her mother, eh? Well, that's one recommendation. I'll take ye, boy."

Terms were soon settled upon, an outfit purchased, Captain Boomer advancing part of the necessary money, the articles were signed, and Alf was one of the crew of the ship Hong Kong, to sail for China on the next day.

Our hero sent a letter by a special messenger to his mother, acquainting her with his movements, and telling her where a letter would reach him, the agent having given him an address in Hong Kong.

Alf slept on board the vessel that night, and on the following afternoon she set sail.

During the forenoon, however, Mr. Rutherford, having learned the name of Alf's captain from his wife, called on the skipper, at the shipping office, whither the old fellow had gone in order to settle up the last matters of business.

"Captain Boomer," he said, taking the man aside, and putting a thick envelope in his hand, "you have a troublesome young cub on board by the name of Thorpe. It will be to your interest and mine if he never returns—if he never even reaches China. Do you understand?"

"H'm! I think I do," muttered the other, who knew that the packet contained money, and considerable of it, very likely. "You want the boy put out of the way!"

"Well, well, accidents occur at sea, you know. He might be washed overboard, or fall from the rigging and break his neck, or turn mutineer and have to be shot, or—in fact, one of a dozen things might happen to him."

"I think it quite likely they will, sir. You're his step-dad, I suppose?"

"I take an interest in the boy, captain, and, of course, I would be very greatly shocked if anything happened to him. There is a little present for yourself to insure your taking the best care of him."

"H'm! Thankee, sir; you're as kind as you are hard-looking. I won't forget your fatherly wishes, sir, you may be sure."

"Be sure that you don't, and when you return I'll give you as much more."

When Rutherford had departed and he was alone, Captain Boomer opened the packet he had received.

"Five hundred dollars, eh! H'm! That's a good price for him, and it's to be doubled when I get back. I don't like taking blood money, but, as he says, accidents will happen, and I guess it can be fixed so as to seem all right and leave nothing on my conscience."

The next day when the banker saw the brief notice in the papers of the sailing of the Hong Kong, he laughed softly to himself, and said:

"Worth a million! When Captain Boomer sees his opportunity, that spirited stepson of mine will be worth to the captain just one thousand dollars, and to himself, not worth a cent!"

At that time the Hong Kong had long since left the land behind her, and was speeding along over the open sea with all sail set, bound to China.

Alf had by this time made the acquaintance of his shipmates, and had found them, in the main, quite a jolly lot of fellows.

He had as yet found no occasion to alter his opinion concerning the captain, but the first mate, Mr. Moore, was a man not at all to his liking, nor as far as that went, to anybody else's, as he seemed to be generally disliked.

In the first place he was evil-looking, having a bulging forehead, a mop of faded-out hair, a broken nose and a scarred cheek.

Then his temper fully coincided with his looks, being wild and sudden and likely to vent itself at any moment in outbreaks of fiendish passion.

The men neither liked nor respected him, and kept out of

his way as much as possible, for he had a habit of shying things at them that was very disagreeable.

The second mate, Mr. Block, a yellow-haired German, was somewhat less objectionable than Moore, though he feared the latter and often did his dirty work in order to save his own head from being made a mark for belaying pins, marline spikes and other missiles.

With the sailors, for the most part, Alf was on good terms, but between him and the cook, a big, full-blooded negro called Suds, because he was so black, the strongest friendship existed, as deep as it was strange.

The two had little in common, apparently, but Suds was a gentleman by instinct, and possessed a certain refinement which one would scarcely look for in a person of his position, and he at once recognized Alf's gentleness as well as strength of character.

"I like dat yer boy fus' rate," he would often mutter to himself, "an' I won't see no harm come to um. De cap'n hab a queer look when him's aroun', an' I 'specs mischief, dough I donno what it am; an' as fo' Mis' Mo', he'm de debil hisse'f, an' I know he make trouble fo' de boy bery soon."

In fact, it was only a few days before Alf and the mate came in collision, although the former did all he could to avoid the surly fellow and have no quarrel with him.

"Come here, you," he growled at Alf one morning when the young fellow came on deck.

Alf approached, and the man, grabbing up a pin from the rail, said savagely:

"Why don't you answer when I speak, confound your white skin?"

"I came to you when you called," answered Alf. "Isn't that sufficient?"

"No, it isn't. You want to say 'sir' when I call you. Go up there and help those fellows shake out that wet sail."

Alf started to climb up, when he heard a sudden whizzing sound and ducked his head just barely in time to escape being hit by an iron belaying pin which fell into the sea.

"Why don't you answer me, you puppy?" growled Moore. "I'll teach you manners if you stay very long on this ship."

"If dat pin had hit dat boy I done kill dat fellah," muttered Suds, who had seen the whole thing from the galley.

Alf made his way up the rigging, not without some trouble, though Suds had previously given him lessons in climbing the shrouds, and was soon at work with the others.

"There was no use at all in your coming up," said a good-natured fellow called Bill, "but then that's the way that brute has."

However, Alf took hold with the rest and did the best he could, returning to the deck when the job was finished.

At first he had slept in the forecastle, but at the end of a week the skipper had provided him a bunk in the cabin, as it was more convenient for himself, having often to call on Alf to help him out in working his reckoning and in making other calculations.

Of course Alf now dined at the cabin table, and that was another source of wrath to Moore, who was a regular boor in all his ways, and to whom the sight of Alf was always a reproach.

"Why don't you eat with your knife, like other folks?" growled the man one day at dinner. "You put on more airs than a little."

"I do as I have been taught, sir," replied Alf, with a quiet smile.

"You don't! You want to show me that you're different, you want to appear better than I am. Why can't you eat your meat and puddin' and all, on the same plate, sweeten your tea with lasses, 'stead of sugar, and use your own knife in the butter, 'stead of taking a clean one? I know why. You want to shame me, you young cub, but I won't be shamed. You'll do as I do, or eat in the galley with the nigger! It's all you're good for, anyhow."

This was only a sample of the sort of treatment Alf got from the mate, but through it all he kept his temper and tried to do his best in everything and not mind these little annoyances.

The captain kept his eyes open and saw the growing dislike of the mate for the young fellow, resolving to feed it from time to time in a sly way.

"I'll get Moore well down on him and he'll do the work for me," he mused. "Then I'll earn my money and have nothing on my conscience."

Two months sped on, and the ship was in the Pacific Ocean, well along on her way to China.

Alf had learned many things, and had become of invaluable assistance to the captain, who sometimes repented of his bargain with Rutherford.

However, his greed was overweening, and the desire to possess the second instalment of his blood money made him forget all other considerations.

He had, by degrees, fanned the flame of Mr. Moore's wrath against Alf by praising the lad to the man's face and in the very teeth of the latter's fault-finding; he had asked Alf to do things for him that Moore generally did; he would help him more bountifully than the mate at table; he would show him kindnesses after every outbreak on the part of the mate, and in these and many other sly ways so worked up the evil passions of the man that he fairly hated the sight of the boy, and was ready to do him any evil turn.

"I'll chuck the brat overboard some of these dark nights," he growled one night when he did not know the skipper was in hearing, while the latter smiled and muttered to himself:

"The thing's as good as done, and I'll have nothing on my conscience."

CHAPTER III.

THE SKIPPER'S CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR.

"All hands on deck!"

This cry rang out above the noise of the storm one dark, tempestuous night during the middle of the last night watch, or about two in the morning.

A storm had suddenly struck the vessel, and the assistance of everybody was needed to save her from destruction.

Alf heard the call with the rest, and in an instant he had sprung out of bed and was hurrying on his clothes.

He was on deck as soon as anybody, and began at once to do all he could to avert the danger.

He worked like a beaver—was here, there, and everywhere at once, rendering the most effective aid and cheering the men by his readiness and courage.

"Here, Alf, just step into the boat, won't you, please, and take the things out of it?"

It was the mate who had spoken, his tones being altogether different from those he generally made use of.

The words, too, though hurriedly spoken, were courteous and quite unlike those that generally passed his lips.

Alf noticed the difference, but he was too busy to take more than a passing note of them.

"Aye, aye, sir!" he answered, jumping into a boat swung upon davits. "Here you go, sir."

"Pass in the oars and the other stuff, Alf," said the mate, "and then we'll hoist her up out of the way of the sea. Stow these things under the rail as the young gentleman passes 'em in, you fellers," he added to Bill and another sailor.

Alf removed the lashings from the oars, passed them in on deck, followed suit with the mast and sail, the boat kegs and compass box, and got everything out and all in good shape.

"Hold on a minute, Alf," shouted the mate. "Don't get out yet. We'd better haul her up a bit, and you can help us on that. Here, men, lay hold on that tackle!"

Three or four men sprang to the ropes, threw them off the cleats, and began hauling away so as to raise the boat.

Snap!

There was a quick, sharp report, and the men fell over backwards upon the deck.

Then came a rushing sound, a cry of alarm, and a heavy splash.

"The boat has gone!"

"The ropes were rotten!"

"Man overboard!"

"Quick! Throw a line or something!"

"All hands to wear ship!"

Men ran to the rail and gazed down into the darkness, trying to catch a glimpse of the unfortunate fellow who had gone overboard.

"Who is it?"

"Alf! He was in the boat."

"God save him, then!"

"Throw him a line, some one!"

"Ahoy there! Are you afloat, Alf?" yelled the captain.

If any reply was made, none was heard, for the tempest howled louder than ever, and the ship was still in danger.

"All hands to wear ship!"

Alf was forgotten in the moment, for there was much to be done, and the life of one man was not as important as the safety of the ship and the lives of all hands.

The vessel was put about, when she headed into the wind and rode more at ease, and then an effort was made to ascertain if the boy were still alive.

Lights flashed along the vessel's side, hoarse voices were heard calling across the waste of waters, and some of the men began to get ready a boat.

No answer was heard from the sea save the voice of the tempest, no sign of the lost boy was seen, and to lower a boat in that rushing current seemed worse than madness.

"He's gone!" muttered the captain, "and there's no help for it now."

"Yes, he's gone, and I'm precious glad of it," muttered Mr. Moore, thinking no one heard him. "I cut them ropes myself, and it was a good job, too. I won't be bothered with the cub any more."

Day came at last, and the storm still raged so that the ship was obliged to lie to and weather the gale, which did not die down till nightfall.

Everybody was saddened at the loss of their comrade, and more than one of the sailors said that it would have been a good thing if Moore, instead of Alf, had been lost.

Suds, the cook, was particularly loud in his lamentations, and declared that he would rather have been drowned himself than lose Alf.

"Dat lilly feller de on'y fren' dis nigger hab on bode," he muttered, "an' I done gib anyfing to fetch um back, 'deed I would. But Mis' Mo' glad ob it, an' if I tink he done it I break him head."

The next morning Suds was missing and likewise one of the boats, but as to how or why the thing had happened no one could tell.

Meanwhile Alf had, by a miracle, been saved from death, and was now floating upon the wide ocean in an open boat.

He had not been capsized by his sudden fall, and, fortunately, the boat had been swept away from the ship and had not been crushed by it, as might easily have happened.

Alf had been stunned by the shock, and lay unconscious in the bottom of the boat for some minutes.

When he recovered, he realized his position, and, seizing the rudder, put the boat up into the wind so that it might not be capsized.

He could see the ship and hear the voices of his late comrades, but his own cries were borne away, and at every instant he drifted farther and farther from the vessel.

He did not despair, however, but commended himself to the mercy of God, and waited for the day to dawn.

When it came he could just see the topsails of the ship far away in the distance.

He knew that his friends would not be able to see such a small thing as his boat upon the waste of waters, and yet he did not abandon hope.

As the day advanced he lost sight of the ship, and was carried on and on by the ever restless billows.

He kept the boat's head straight, and though some water was shipped, of course, it was not enough to endanger his safety, and he rode gallantly over wave after wave, though oftentimes it seemed as if they were about to overwhelm him.

Night came and the violence of the waves abated, though they still carried him on and on over the silent sea.

A heavy dew fell, and this somewhat allayed the pangs of thirst which had been oppressing him all day.

Morning came again and found him alone on the broad ocean in an open boat, without food or water, oars or sails, exposed to the dangers of the deep, and to the agony of hunger and thirst.

He had never conceived the horrors through which he passed that day, and it was only his firm reliance on the will of God that kept him alive.

Racked with a thousand pains, tormented with a burning thirst, filled with despair at his approaching fate, he was well nigh driven mad, and only his faith in Providence kept him from it.

With the night came a grateful shower of rain, and then he knew the boundless delight of being able to satisfy one's thirst after a long abstinence.

He took off his coat, let it fill with the blessed water and drank deep draughts of it, seeming never to get enough.

He could endure hunger, now that his thirst was quenched; he could even sleep and care not whether his boat was upset or not.

All night he slept soundly in the bottom of the boat while the waves bore him on, at their own sweet will.

Darkness fled away, the day came again and the sun, lighting the rippling waves, shone upon his bronzed cheek and at last awoke him from his slumbers.

He arose, stretched his limbs, sat upon a thwart and looked all around him.

At first he saw nothing but the open sea and a sigh escaped his lips.

Then he gazed in another direction and saw a lovely island with the surf breaking in foaming billows upon its sandy shores; while a dozen large canoes, all manned by dark-skinned men, could be seen putting out and steering directly for him.

"Saved!" he murmured, and then he sank exhausted upon the thwart.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM BAD TO WORSE.

Although Alfred Thorpe had been saved from the fury of the waves and from the tortures of hunger and thirst, it was not altogether certain but that he had been reserved for a worse fate.

The men in the canoes that were approaching his boat were terrible-looking fellows, nearly naked, tattooed from head to foot, armed with clubs and spears, and of most ferocious aspect.

They set up a dreadful yelling as they paddled their rude crafts toward him, and made all sorts of hostile demonstrations.

Poor Alf was too weak to make any resistance, and scarcely able to sit up in his boat, and he awaited the coming of the savages with passive indifference.

He had a dim sense of impending fate, but he was not frightened, being in such a low condition that he seemed scarcely capable of emotion.

The canoes approaches rapidly, and his boat was soon surrounded, the savages evidently fearing that their victim might yet escape them.

"Do with me as you like," said Alf, "but for mercy's sake give me something to eat and drink."

The savages glared and jabbered at him, and he was forced to smile at their earnestness.

"Of course they don't understand me," he muttered. "I did not think of that."

The canoes were now alongside, and Alf was dragged out of his boat and placed in the bottom of one of the canoes.

The latter then quickly headed for the shore, the boat being taken in tow as a prize, its construction being regarded with considerable curiosity by the blacks.

As the canoes approached the shore they encountered a heavy surf, but the rowers were extremely dexterous, and not a single canoe was capsized.

Alf felt himself lifted up on the top of a high wave and swept swiftly forward, the canoe at the next moment grating on the sand.

All hands sprang out in an instant and dragged the canoe up on the beach beyond the reach of the breakers.

The prisoner was then lifted out and placed in the middle of a pile of his captors, who marched rapidly up the beach.

Alf was not bound, but the savages hurried him on so fast and hemmed him in so thickly that there was not the least chance of escape.

The party headed toward a little grove a quarter of a mile distant, but before they had gone half the distance poor Alf fell exhausted upon the sand.

The savages began chattering and yelling, and some of them dragged the helpless lad to his feet and forced him forward.

He fell again before he had taken three steps, and lost all consciousness.

Two of the blacks now laid hold upon him by the head and heels and in this way carried him to the grove.

Here, in the cool and grateful shade, he presently recovered and made signs that he wished to eat and drink.

A boy, somewhat younger than himself, of an olive complexion and strikingly handsome, brought him a deep shell filled with spring water clear as crystal and deliciously cold.

Alf drank it off, smiled gratefully, and then, with a sudden thought, put his hand into his pocket.

He had a few silver and copper coins there, and selecting a bright dime he gave it to the boy who had brought him the water.

The latter took the piece, turned it over, laughed outright, dropped it into an odd corner of his white breech cloth, the only garment he possessed, and then went dancing away in great glee.

Presently he returned, bearing in his hands two large leaves, between which was some boiled rice, a small quantity of roasted goat's meat and some small fruit, resembling pears, very juicy and with a peculiar spicy flavor.

Alf took the food, smiled his thanks and ate heartily, being obliged to use his fingers, of course, in the absence of knives and forks.

The boy watched him closely, and at the conclusion of the meal brought him another shell of water, at the same time darting an expectant look at his guest.

Alf picked out a copper cent, which had been worn bright by contact with other things in his pocket, and presented it to the lad with a great show of courtesy.

The coin, being brighter and larger than the first, greatly took the boy's fancy, and he danced and capered about in great glee.

Finally he seized Alf's right hand, placed it between both his own, raised his eyes to the sky, bowed his head, dropped on one knee, and then sprang up and danced around with the agility of a kitten.

Alf smiled, looked around upon the blacks sitting on the ground or standing about among the trees, and mused:

"They are a savage-looking lot, and appear capable of any crime; but this boy seems of a different race, and decidedly more human."

The boy did, in fact, differ in many ways from the men, being olive-skinned, while they were dark-brown, almost black, and had ugly, repulsive faces, his being singularly handsome.

After his last demonstrations of delight he ran away and disappeared among the trees, and, although Alf looked anxiously for him, he did not return.

At the end of an hour the party that had captured Alf resumed their march, striking through the grove, which extended at least half a mile, crossed a stretch of level country, entered a narrow pass between two hills, and finally, at the end of half an hour, came to a clearing, surrounded by huts, one of which was larger than the rest.

"This doubtless is their village," thought Alf, "and now I shall know my fate. Where can the boy have gone? I relied upon him to save me, but now I fear that my hopes were groundless."

Upon the entry of the party into the village there was a great outcry, and young men, boys and children in great numbers rushed out.

Alf excited their curiosity, both from his dress and the color of his skin, and many were the expressions of wonder which both called forth.

The leader of the party who had brought him in turned suddenly upon the crowd, uttered some angry words, and then gave an order to two or three of his men.

Alf was seized, hurried away, stripped to the heels and thrown into a small, circular hut almost devoid of light, but cool and airy nevertheless.

In one corner there was a pile of grass mats, soft and yielding, and upon these the tired boy threw himself and fell immediately into a deep sleep.

When he awoke, after a sleep of several hours, the moonlight was streaming in at the open door of his hut, all being silent without.

A shadow fell upon the floor at regular intervals, and stepping to the door, Alf saw a solitary sentinel pacing to and fro.

He was armed with a long spear, and, as Alf stepped forward, he placed this across the entrance like a bar, but made no hostile demonstration.

"There is no use in trying to talk to these fellows, for they can't understand my words and won't heed my signs," muttered Alf, as he stepped back.

The man then paced up and down as before, his shadow coming and going on the floor as regular as the ticking of a clock.

Returning to the couch, he found a roll of white cloth at the foot, which he threw over himself and lay for some time listening to the monotonous tread of the silent sentinel without, and recalling the incidents of the last few days.

Finally he fell asleep thinking of his boy friend of the morning, and wondering if he would again appear.

He was awakened by some men rushing into the hut and dragging him from his couch, the sun being now an hour or two high.

He was allowed to gird a strip of cloth around his loins, and, entirely nude, save for that, was hurried out into the open space before the great hut.

His arms were fastened behind him, his ankles were secured by a rope of bark, and then he was led in front of a

hideous savage seated on a sort of throne, and surrounded by a dozen dusky warriors.

Others formed in a circle about him, and began dancing and shouting in the most terrific fashion.

Had not the dread of his coming fate weighed heavily upon the poor boy's mind he could not but have laughed at the strange appearance of his enemies.

They had, somehow, obtained possession of the contents of a number of seamen's chests and were arrayed in the oddest fashion.

The ruler was naked, save for a kilt of red cloth about his waist, a head-dress of gaudy feathers, and a great number of brass, copper, and iron rings upon his arms and legs.

The appearance of the dancers was, however, to say the least, very remarkable.

One wore a white shirt and nothing else; another had on a blue coat with brass buttons and lots of gold lace, while a third wore only a tall, black silk hat stuck on the back of his head.

A pair of blue trousers fastened about his neck, the legs hanging over his breast, formed the curious costume of one big fellow with rings in his ears and a tuft of feathers in his hair.

A swallow-tail coat, fastened about his waist by the sleeves, the tails hanging in front, was another's rig.

A huge, black, ugly fellow wore two long woolen stockings, one red and the other gray, upon his arms like gloves, while his feet were encased in a pair of sea-boots reaching above his knees.

Two or three had white cotton or blue flannel shirts girded about their waists; some had a single boot or shoe upon their hands, and one had made a novel pair of breeches by thrusting his legs through the arm-holes of an embroidered velvet waistcoat, while another had found a very striking rig by punching holes through a dozen or more tin plates and stringing them around his neck and waist and suspending them from his elbows and knees.

All these grotesquely attired savages went dancing and yelling about the prisoner, brandishing clubs and spears, making threatening gestures and apparently only awaiting a signal from their chief to put the poor boy to a terrible death.

There was a ludicrous as well as awful side to the scene, but Alf saw only its terrors, and looked anxiously around for the sight of some friendly face.

He saw none, and at that moment the chief arose and made a gesture to his guards.

Alf's blood froze within him, for he felt that death was at hand.

CHAPTER V.

A DAY IN WONDERLAND.

At a signal from the chief two ferocious savages seized Alf and threw him upon his face in the sand.

At a second sign, a huge naked fellow, tattooed from head to foot, and bearing the scars of a hundred wounds, raised a ponderous club and poised it over the prostrate youth.

In another instant his skull would have been crushed in like an egg-shell.

Suddenly the shrill blast of a trumpet was heard just beyond the confines of the village.

The executioner stepped back, dropped his club, and fell upon his face.

The savages all imitated his example, the king's guards falling to their knees.

The king himself left his throne and advanced toward the prisoner.

Then a second blast sounded, and the boy by whom Alf had been befriended came running into the open space.

He hurried forward, caught up a knife which one of the guards had dropped, and severed the cords which bound Alf's limbs.

He then raised the young fellow to his feet, and at that moment a third blast of the trumpet resounded through the waving branches.

Turning toward the king, the boy uttered a few words in an imperious tone, and at that instant a strange procession entered the square.

A dozen women, clad all in white from head to foot, first advanced with slow and measured tread, while after them, at an interval of twenty feet, came a score of young, very pretty olive-skinned girls, clad in loose, almost transparent, robes,

dancing and playing upon quaint musical instruments, which emitted a most pleasing sound.

Then at a distance of twenty feet came a band of a hundred women, armed with spears and shields, and wearing short, white kilts, sandals and breast-plates of leather and helmets of tough woven grass, studded here and there with bits of metal and surmounted by feathers.

After these came a dozen closely veiled figures bearing a sort of open palanquin, in which sat a woman clad in white, but whose face could not be seen.

The rear of the procession was brought up by scores of lovely girls who made no show of veiling their beauty, and yet were as modest as maidens should be.

The bearers advanced with the palanquin to the king's house, the guards, dancing girls, and women warriors forming in two compact lines, one on either side.

Alf's boy friend then led him to the palanquin, where the veiled lady addressed a few words to him in a gentle tone.

Turning them to the dusky monarch, she addressed him in so haughty and imperious a manner that Alf could scarcely believe it was the same person who spoke.

The black kneeled in the dust before the litter of this proud creature, and would have taken her hand, but that she withdrew hastily and made a sign to one of her veiled attendants.

Instantly another litter was brought, into which Alf was lifted and borne by a dozen handsome boys, who suddenly appeared when he first clapped his hands.

Suddenly the trumpet sounded again, the curtains were drawn around the veiled woman's litter, the procession was formed as before, and in a few moments the great square before the king's house was vacated.

The boy ran alongside the litter in which Alf sat, and from time to time glanced at its occupant, who bestowed a gracious look upon him.

It was all strange to Alf, and he knew not what to think.

He had been rescued from death, but the future was as yet a mystery to him, and he knew not what might be in store.

There was little chance for conversation, as the boy bearers of his litter hurried on at a rapid pace, now passing through dense woods where the sun seemed never to penetrate, now through rocky passes where huge boulders lay scattered around, and again across open stretches of country where the grass was as green as emeralds, and thousands of bright flowers nodded their pretty heads.

Presently they entered a narrow valley, not much wider than a ravine, where, as they advanced, the rocks towered higher and higher above their heads.

At last they came to what seemed to be the end of their route.

A wall of rock a thousand feet high lay right across their path.

From a narrow ledge some thirty feet above the ground there fell a shining cascade of water into a shallow basin, whence it ran off to the right and left and lost itself among the rocks.

A shower of spray constantly arose from this basin, and rainbows hung over it as the rays of the sun struck into the ravine.

The procession kept on, much to Alf's surprise, and presently he beheld the veiled woman, the young girls, the women warriors, and the palanquin of the veiled queen disappear one after another behind the cascade.

It was all strange and mysterious, and he knew not if he was awake or dreaming.

Presently his boy palanquin bearers approached the wall, and in an instant a curtain was drawn all about his litter.

Then he heard a splash, darkness succeeded, and he felt himself borne along through some mysterious passage.

Presently the curtains were withdrawn, a flood of light burst upon him, and he found himself upon the edge of a plateau, while before him spread the loveliest scene his eyes had ever witnessed.

High above him was the clear sky, without a cloud to break the grand dome of heaven's eternal blue, while all around were the tops of a range of mountains shutting in the fairest valley that ever the sun shone upon.

Broad expanses of fertile plain, silvery streams, luxuriant groves, clusters of white dwellings, and in the distance a glittering palace built of some white stone were the chief features of this beautiful scene.

From the plateau the way led by easy descents to terrace after terrace, and thence to the plains below.

Already the cortege of the veiled queen could be seen making its way to the great white palace, while the women and

girls disappeared right and left among the trees or into the houses.

Here and there men could be seen working in the plantations, building houses, cutting down trees, or engaged in other occupations.

When Alf had gazed for some moments upon this busy scene the boy approached and signaled to him to alight.

Alf stepped out of the litter; the bearers hurried away in one direction and another, while the boy, taking his hand, led him down several of the terraces, and then, turning to the right, walked along the sward for several hundred feet and entered a stone house, one story in height, the central room being a sort of court, open to the sky, but capable of being shielded by curtains of woven grass, like a sliding roof.

In the centre a pretty fountain was playing, and on each side were various apartments, small but well appointed.

Into one of these the boy led the young castaway, where he showed him some loose white garments, which he could put on if he chose.

Alf chose a short kilt, a close-fitting vest, a loose jacket and a pair of sandals, the boy assisting him to put them on.

Then Alf sat down on a stone bench running along the wall and covered with soft furs, while the boy looked at him as if wishing to know his further pleasure.

"What is your name?" Alf asked.

The boy looked at him attentively, but with a puzzled look.

Alf thought for a moment, pointed to himself, and said distinctly:

"Alfred!"

The boy looked at him, and Alf repeated the word and the motion.

Presently the boy's lips opened, and he repeated the name.

Then Alf pointed to the boy himself, and looked inquiringly at him.

"Gollo!" said the lad upon the instant, and with a quick glance of intelligence.

"Gollo?" repeated Alf, questioningly.

The boy nodded his head, pointed to his companion, repeated the name he had heard and laughed.

"Come, come, we are getting on faniously," said Alf, smiling. "We know each other's names at least. Now let us see if we can improve upon this."

Then, rising, he signaled to Gollo to follow him, led the way to the terrace, pointed to the palace, made a motion as if veiling himself, and questioned the boy with his eyes.

Gollo made a low obeisance, and answered in a whisper: "Tanita!"

Alf stretched out his arms, slowly turned around and repeated the name, as if asking if all this beautiful land belonged to Tanita, the boy nodding his head by way of reply.

Then Alf pointed over the mountain, put on a fierce look, imitated the gestures of the savage king, and finally questioned the boy as before.

"Ogambo!" said Gollo, quickly and with a frown, as if the fierce black was no favorite of his.

After this Alf returned to the house, where he continued his study of the language by asking the names of various objects, pointing to them and then giving a look of inquiry.

By evening he had learned the names of the parts of his body, the trees, the sky, the mountains, the river, the sea, the houses and in fact more things than he could remember but making very good progress withal in spite of obstacles.

When night came Gollo went away, and presently returned with four or five other boys of his own age, who brought a supper consisting of rice, cooked meat, milk, fruit and clear water.

Alf supped like a king, being served by Gollo and the rest, who anticipated his every wish.

Then some of the boys procured some quaint musical instruments, and sitting around the fountain in the moonlight, played many curious melodies, while others sang and Gollo fanned his white guest, sitting at his feet as he lay on a couch until, what with the splashing of the fountain, the quaint music, the soft voices of the young singers and the ceaseless motion of the fan, Alf dropped off into a gentle sleep and dreamed that he was king of this mysterious realm, that Tanita was his wife and that he counted his wealth, not by millions, but by millions of millions, and that thousands of slaves did his slightest bidding.

In the morning Gollo came to him with his breakfast and a new and extremely rich suit of apparel, indicating by many signs and gestures that it was the wish of Queen Tanita that he would pay her a visit at her great white palace, a litter bearer being already at his disposal.

"An audience with the queen!" muttered Alf. "To what will it lead? Truly, I have come upon strange times, and I can't tell yet if I am awake or asleep."

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEWS FROM CHINA.

It was six months since Alfred Thorpe had sailed away in the ship Hong Kong and no word had been received from him.

His mother often spoke of him, and, as the time went by would wonder why he had not written.

"It's a long voyage to China," said Mr. Rutherford, "and you can't expect to hear from him before a year, at least, even if he troubles himself to write, which I doubt."

"Alfred will write, of course," said Mrs. Rutherford.

"I don't believe it. He will be too busy when he gets on shore, drinking and carousing with his low companions, to even think of writing. Much he cares for you, anyhow."

The lady colored and was about to make an angry retort, when little Daisy, Alf's sister, came running into the room with a newspaper in her hand.

"Oh, mamma," she cried, "Alf's ship has reached China and is going to sail again."

"There, what did I tell you?" said Rutherford, with a sneer. "You ought to have had a letter, and you haven't had one. Of course he won't write."

"The China mail may not have reached our post office yet," said his wife, not at all convinced. "Alfred's letter will come in a day or so."

The man snatched the paper from the child's hand, glanced at it, and said, with a coarse laugh:

"Ha, ha! this is Tuesday's paper and to-day is Friday. The China mail is in long ago, why, yes, here it is now," and he read from another part of the paper:

"The mails from China and Japan arrived last night, and will be ready for distribution this morning."

"Then Alf must have written," cried Daisy. "You have kept back his letters. I know he would write us just as soon as he reached land."

"Leave the room, you brat!" cried Rutherford, with an angry gesture.

Daisy ran away in alarm, and Rutherford said angrily:

"That child is getting too lazy and impudent to be endured. She must be sent away."

"You surely would not deprive me of both my children?" said the mother reproachfully.

"Both! You have a child of mine to look after, and that's enough."

"But Daisy looks after the baby now."

"She does not. She is idle and impudent. I am going to send her to my sister's, where she will be properly trained."

"You will not surely take——"

"I will; and, in fact, I have already made arrangements. The child leaves to-morrow."

"Oh, Rutherford, you will drive me mad!"

The unhappy woman had given the villain the very clue he most desired.

"H'm! I believe you are three-quarters crazy now!" he muttered, as he left the room.

"Not a bad idea," he said to himself, as he left the house to go to the bank. "I can't get hold of her money as easily as I expected, but this will do the business."

When he reached the bank he found among his many letters one with a foreign postmark, and addressed in a cramped hand.

"From China!" he gasped. "It must have been delayed. Perhaps, after all, Alf has written. I should have intercepted his letters."

Then he tore open the envelope, took out a half sheet of coarse, blue paper and read as follows:

Hong Kong, Sept. 2d.

"Dear Sir.—This is to inform you that your son fell overboard and was drowned two months ago in a gale of wind and a open boat. Don't forget the rest of the money. I will call and git it when I git back to York. Yours truly,

"SILAS BLOOMER, Capt'n."

"Ha, ha! this is good news indeed," muttered Rutherford, as he put the letter in his pocketbook. "With Alf dead, the girl with that angelic sister of mine and the mother in the madhouse, what can stand between me and a fortune?"

Then he dispatched a note to a certain evening paper and went on with business as usual.

When he returned to his elegant residence that afternoon he found his wife in her sitting-room, and, carelessly throwing down the paper, said:

"There's to-night's paper, if you care to look at it. There's nothing in it, however. By the way, have you seen to packing the child's things? She goes by the first train to-morrow morning."

"I do not think she ought to go, Rutherford," said his wife, pleadingly.

"Well, she is going, and that settles it!" he cried, brutally, as he left the room.

The poor woman picked up the paper wearily and began to read.

Her head ached, her temples throbbed, and she could not fix her attention upon anything till presently she caught the headline:

"LOST OVERBOARD."

"What's this?" she gasped, taking the paper to the window. "'A private letter from Captain Boomer of the ship Hong Kong, which left this port for China, some six months ago, to a friend in this city, states that a seaman named Alfred Thorpe, of New York, fell overboard during a gale while the ship was in the Pacific Ocean and was drowned. Young Thorpe is said to be respectably connected, but had acquired wild and vicious habits and shipped as a common sailor, despite the wishes of his relatives."

The paper fell from the woman's hands, while a look of despair came into her careworn face.

"Alfred dead!" she shrieked. "Oh, heavens! Could I not have been spared this blow!"

Then she fell to the floor with a cry of agony, and lay there like one dead.

At the sound Rutherford came into the room, looked at the poor lady, and chuckled:

"So—so, the poison has begun to work. I was sure she would see it. Now to take the next step."

That evening Mrs. Rutherford was reported to be sick with a high fever, and that Mrs. Adderly had been sent for in hot haste.

The next morning Mrs. Adderly went away with Daisy as her companion, for the good of the child's health, it was said.

The next day the names of Mrs. Rutherford, infant and nurse were on the passenger list of a vessel bound to the south of France.

The lady had gone abroad, it was said, to recover from a severe shock to her health caused by the sudden news of the death of her scapegrace son at sea.

The lady had not gone abroad, however, though many believed she had.

The poor woman had been driven, half insensible, in a closed carriage, to a dismal-looking place out of town, and when she recovered consciousness found herself among strangers in a cheerless room.

"What is this place?" she asked. "How did I come here?"

"Madam, this is a retreat for the cure of those unfortunate persons whose minds become temporarily clouded, but who, under the mild and benign treatment which we administer, are ultimately restored to sanity."

"Sanity—retreat—clouded minds," gasped the poor woman. "Then this is an insane asylum?"

"Exactly, my poor lady, though we do not use so harsh a term to express—"

"Why have I been brought to an insane asylum?" demanded Mrs. Rutherford, sharply.

"For treatment and recovery, dear madam, from the unhappy condition of mind in which you—"

"But I am as sane as yourself!" she cried, springing up. "Let me out of this horrible place! I will not stay here another moment!"

"Oh, yes, you will," chuckled the other, "for you are quite mad, you know."

Then he laid a detaining hand upon the unfortunate woman and held her as in a vise.

"Mad!" gasped the lady. "Heavens! what cruel blow is this?"

Then with a piercing shriek she swooned away, and, as the man in black relaxed his grasp, fell senseless to the floor.

CHAPTER VII.

FIENDS AT THEIR WORK.

"Miss Jones, how is Number Fifty-six?"

"Quite reasonable, sir."

"H'm, that don't do. You must stir her up a bit. I expect that her husband will be here to-day, and things must look right."

"How would tickling her feet do?"

"First-rate, and throwing some nice sharp brine over her, and dropping water on her head."

"I'll have her in good condition, sir, you may be sure, sir."

"See that you do, Miss Jones, or I may forget to save you a nice little present after the gentleman goes."

Miss Jones was the principal lady attendant at the Shady-side Retreat for the Insane.

The gentleman who was giving her such particular instructions was Dr. Philo Harden, the proprietor of the institution.

Number Fifty-six was poor Mrs. Rutherford, Alf's mother, now an inmate of the asylum some three months.

Miss Jones was a hard-featured, hard-fisted, angular woman of forty-five, in whose breast the milk of human kindness had long since run dry.

Upon leaving the doctor's study she went to the dangerous ward, as it was called, armed with a stout whip.

"Now, then, Fifty-six, come out!" she said, as she paused in front of a grated doorway and turned the key in the lock.

"I will not come out," said the occupant. "You wish to beat me, to torture me, to drive me mad. I will starve before I come out."

"Maybe you'll starve anyway," said Miss Jones, "and you will gain nothing by obstinacy. Come out!"

Number Fifty-six not only refused to come out, but retreated to the farthest corner of the cell out of reach of the human fiend at the door.

"Jane! Susan!" called Miss Jones.

Two frowsy-looking women appeared at her summons.

"Fifty-six is refractory again. Fetch her out," cried Miss Jones, swinging the door open.

The two women darted in, pounced upon the poor victim, one on each side, and literally dragged her out.

One sleeve of her dress was torn away, exposing the bare flesh.

Swish!

The cruel lash descended, drawing blood.

"You won't come out, eh!" snarled Miss Jones, following up the question with a second blow.

The victim screamed and fell to the floor in a swoon.

"Salt her!" muttered the ogress Jones.

One of the assistants brought a pail of strong brine and dashed it over the inanimate woman.

The exquisite pain revived her, and she staggered to her feet only to be knocked down by the brutal Miss Jones.

"Take her and put her under the pump!" she hissed.

The two demons in female guise seized the poor woman and dragged her off despite her screams.

We have not the heart to describe here the tortures which only the ingenuity of a fiend could invent, and which were practiced on the unhappy woman.

Let it suffice to say that the agony of mind and body, consequent upon her inhuman treatment, threw her into such a state of nervous hysteria that she was little less than a maniac at that moment.

"Three gentlemen to see you, sir."

"Show them in, Simpson."

Dr. Harden was sitting in his cozy study when his visitors entered.

"Ah, Mr. Rutherford, this is indeed a pleasure, and a pain,

too, I am constrained to say."

"Is she no better, then, poor dear?"

"Not only no better, my dear, unhappy Mr. Rutherford, but decidedly worse. I am afraid I must pronounce her case incurable."

"You really do not think so, doctor?" said Rutherford, with every show of distress.

"That is my firm conviction. However, you had best see and judge for yourself."

"I presume so, and yet it is a melancholy duty, doctor, for a husband to see his poor wife in such a state."

"Yes, Mr. Rutherford, but such is life."

"Oh, by the way, doctor, these gentlemen are my friends, Messrs. Lockett and Wheeler, lawyers and attorneys."

"Ah, glad to see you, gentlemen," said the old scoundrel. "The parties appointed by the court to decide whether or not Mrs. R. is of sound enough mind to take care of her own property," he added to himself.

"We have a little matter of business, doctor, to talk over between us, and I presume you would not object to their accompanying me?"

"Not at all, sir, not at all. They got here just at the right time, thanks to that villain," he added.

The doctor took his visitors to the ward where his worst cases were confined, and here poor Mrs. Rutherford was found in a padded cell, her clothes torn, her hair disheveled and her entire appearance like that of a wild beast in her cage.

As the visitors paused, she, thinking that Miss Jones had returned, sprang against the door and shouted:

"Let me out, demon, let me tear you limb from limb as these fiends have torn me; let me whip you with heated iron; let me send molten lead through all your veins as the devils around me have done. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

She laughed, she shrieked, she shook the grating, she spat at the visitors and acted altogether unlike the gentle, noble-hearted lady she had once been.

"Sad case, very," said Lockett. "Is she this way often, doctor?"

"My dear sir, she is mildness itself now to what she generally is."

"You are willing to state this under oath?"

"Certainly, sir, much to my regret."

They passed on toward the doctor's study, the poor woman shrieking after them.

"I do not think any further investigation is necessary," said Wheeler. "Nobody in such a condition can ever recover."

"We are perfectly willing to recommend, Mr. Rutherford, that your application to be appointed guardian of your wife's estate be granted."

"It is a sad duty, gentlemen, but in matters of business we sometimes have to adopt strange measures."

"Perfectly proper," said Lockett.

"No other course would secure the proper care of the estate," added Wheeler.

"A couple of old humbugs cleverly hoodwinked," thought Dr. Philo Harden.

"That business is settled, then," mused Rutherford. "Wonder how Harden timed it so nicely? Once she is adjudged a lunatic and unfit to handle her own property, I care not how soon she becomes one in fact."

As the visitors were going out, Rutherford slipped a roll of bills into Harden's hand unnoticed by the others.

"Divide that among your hired fiends, you arch-demon!" chuckled Rutherford, in a tone heard only by Philo Harden himself. "I'll see that you get what I promised."

"Yes, and more, too, kind-hearted Christian gentleman, you exemplary husband, you model father," sneered Philo Harden, after his visitors had left. "I am not taking the risk of getting on the wrong side of the walls of a State prison for nothing, Mr. Rutherford, and he who buys goods at the devil's shop must pay high for them."

"What an oily old hypocrite that is," mused Rutherford, when he was alone, "but what a master hand at deviltry. I could not have picked out a better man to do this business, but I must look out for him, too, as these artists are always apt to prove dangerous."

It was diamond cut diamond, and each member of this pair of accomplished scoundrels was ready to cut the other's throat in order to save his own.

Poor Alf, on the other side of the world, little knew of the work he would have to do when, having gathered his millions, he returned home, little dreamed of the fight for justice in which he would have to engage, he, a mere boy, against men whose entire lives had been spent in the schools of crime, craftiness and loye of self.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE STORY OF TANITA.

When Alf received the summons through the boy Gollo to visit Queen Tanita in her great white palace, it was with grave doubts of the result that he set out upon his journey.

He could not but feel that the strange things he had already seen were but preludes to stranger experiences, and it was with no little trepidation, therefore, that he put on the glittering dress furnished him and placed himself in the litter.

The result of his interview, however, was as far beyond his expectations as could well be imagined.

Gollo accompanied him, running by the side of the palanquin all the way, and seeming never to tire.

Reaching the palace, which stood at the top of a series of

terraces built of some white stone resembling marble, but much softer, Alf and his young friend entered a court, where numerous fountains made the air deliciously cool, while rich perfumes greeted the senses.

Gollo prostrated himself upon entering, and then passed rapidly through room after room, from court to court, till he at last came to a beautiful garden, shielded from the sun by rich canopies of some unknown cloth, where fountains softly murmured, birds of loveliest plumage flitted from branch to branch, and the choicest flowers bloomed in bewildering profusion.

As Alf stood gazing upon the beauties of this fairy scene, a heavy curtain suspended before an arched doorway was suddenly drawn aside, and the veiled woman appeared whom he had seen the previous day.

She beckoned to them to approach, and Alf did so, albeit his heart was in his mouth, Gollo following.

When they entered the room, small and elegantly appointed, the woman motioned toward a cushioned bench of stone, and, throwing aside her veil, said:

"Young stranger, you are welcome to the abode of Tanita."

Alf was thunderstruck.

Two startling surprises had burst upon him in one instant.

First, the queen was nearly as white as himself, and wonderfully beautiful, and second, she spoke his own language.

The queen noticed his surprise, laughed lightly, and then said:

"I have surprised you?"

"Yes, and in more ways than one, gracious sovereign."

"Indeed, and how?"

"To begin with, I have never seen so beautiful a woman in all my life," said Alf, frankly.

The faintest tinge of color appeared in the woman's face, and then she smiled, and said:

"Your praise is as sincere as it is blunt. In what other way do I surprise you?"

"By speaking my own tongue."

"After all the trouble you were at yesterday to acquire that of the people around you?" and she laughed merrily.

"How knew you that?" he asked, in unfeigned surprise.

"Few things transpire here that I am not aware of," she answered mysteriously.

"Does Gollo speak English, then?"

"He does not, and I will teach you his language much more rapidly and effectively than he can."

"I shall be glad to learn of so fair an instructor."

"You should be a Frenchman, by your knowledge of the art of flattery, my dear Alfred, but your frankness tells me that you are an American."

"Whence comes your knowledge?" cried Alf. "Are you more than mortal, that you know so much?"

"It is my whim that my subjects shall consider me such, and the fact of my speaking to you freely in your own tongue will be, to these people, another proof of it. Do you see how still Gollo, there, sits, drinking in the scene with eyes and ears?"

The boy had caught the sound of his own name, and quickly averted his head as Alf glanced at him.

"The boy is your slave?"

"He is the most faithful of my subjects, and the one most trusted, despite his tender years, and, more than that, is my own son. Though you must not breathe it to him or others."

"Your son! Then you are a native of this strange place, and not an enforced resident like myself?"

"Would you like to hear my story?" said Tanita, bending forward. "It is a strange one."

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure."

"I am the queen of this people," the woman went on, "and rule my people absolutely, having authority even over the barbarous tribes of the coast."

"This island, for it is one, has long been inhabited by two different races of people, but formerly the blacks were the ruling spirits."

"Some twenty years ago there came a white man on the island, wrecked during a fearful storm, and he alone of all his companions survived."

"He was doomed to death, but I saved his life, for I had fallen in love with him at the first sight of his handsome face."

"He was an American, like yourself, and taught me his language and all that he knew besides, and restored our race to its former power."

"Under his sway, for he was married to me and reigned in pride and dignity over the kingdom, my people arose to an eminence they had never reached before."

"Two sons were born to us. Gollo who serves you, and

another, four years older, but he was sacrificed to our strange laws, and to appease the wrath of our priests and ministers, Gollo's birth was kept a secret, and now none know that he is my son, and I charge you never to repeat it."

"But your husband? He is not still here?"

"No. He died some ten years since, and I have ruled in his stead. King Ogambo fears me and acknowledges my sway, knowing not that the white king is dead, and fearing that he may return. It was necessary to wage a relentless war on these people until they were reduced to a proper state of subjection, and the name of the white king became a terror among them."

"It is my will that no white man who comes to this island shall be destroyed, but Ogambo sometimes disobeys my command, and Gollo or one of the boys usually keeps watch upon the coast after a storm, to see that whites, if they are cast ashore, are not destroyed."

"Before you came, a few days, a ship was cast ashore and all the unfortunate sailors murdered and robbed, the vessel being driven upon a bar, where she now lies."

"We were too late to prevent this awful calamity, but Gollo witnessed your capture, and after seeing to your wants came at once and apprised us of your peril."

"Once every year, at a certain time, a pure youth, under the age of fifteen, is sacrificed to the Spirit of the Waters, the victim being chosen by lot."

"Why is a boy selected?"

"Because young manhood is typical of strength and beauty, and purity, and the sacrifice is the greatest that we can make."

"Are these boys chosen from any one class?"

"Yes, from the best and bravest and purest, and many are brought up and taught to live such a life as to place them within this class, considering it the highest honor to be thus sacrificed."

"When does the next ceremony occur?"

"Within the month."

"May it not be Gollo's lot to die at the time?"

Tanita turned pale and shuddered, but quickly recovering herself, said:

"No, no; there are a hundred boys among whom the lot will fall, and Gollo's chance is small."

"But the law?" said Alf. "He stands within its limits now, and what can you do?"

"Defy or defeat it!" hissed Tanita. "Gollo shall not die!"

At that instant the boy himself rushed into the apartment, fell upon his face and said:

"A boat approaches the beach of breakers, like that in which Alfred came to our shores. A man sits alone upon the beach. He is dressed as Alfred was, but seems black of skin."

Tanita quickly told Alf what Gollo had said, and then commanded the boy to take a score or more of his young companions and rescue the castaway.

"I will go with him!" cried Alf.

"Do so, and take this ring. It will be as a talisman to you."

Thereupon Tanita took a heavy gold band set with a dozen sparkling diamonds, from her finger and gave it to Alf.

"Guard it well," she said, "for it may save your life."

Putting the ring upon his little finger, Alf bade the queen a hasty farewell, and left the place in pursuit of Gollo, who had nearly vanished from sight.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BLACK FLAG ON THE ROOF.

Alf, Gollo and between twenty and thirty boys from fourteen to seventeen years, hurried across the valley, through the veil of water, and down the mountain by an almost precipitous path shorter than the way by which Alf had come, till they reached the shore.

In the distance they beheld a crowd of blacks surging and struggling about some object in the center, what, they could not make out.

With Gollo at their head they dashed along the beach at full speed, the tide being out and the hard sand affording them the best possible road.

On they ran like a troop of horses, each trying to outrace his fellow, and all uttering shrill cries.

Presently the blacks saw them coming, and formed in a square to await their arrival.

The boys paused at a word from Gollo, when within twenty

yards of the blacks, and the young leader advancing, demanded the surrender of the prisoner, whom they could now see standing in the open space behind the blacks, held by two stalwart warriors.

"Why does the messenger of the white queen wish the captive?" said one of the leaders. "He is black like ourselves."

"The dark man has come from over the great waters, Dogono, son of Ogambo, and is not one of your people," said Gollo, "and it's the wish of the queen that he be brought to the white palace."

"He is black, I tell you, boy of the fair skin, and our rightful prey."

"Nevertheless, Dogono, we must see him. Stand aside that we may see him."

The blacks stood firm and looked threateningly at the group of boys, and just then Alf caught sight of the prisoner.

"Is that you, Suds?" he cried.

"Merciful heavens, am dat yo', Marse Alf? Hab I foun' yo' at las'?" cried the prisoner.

"It is Suds, our black cook," said Alf, excitedly, forgetting that Gollo could not understand.

Then, pressing forward, he flashed the ring that Tanita had given him in the eyes of Dogono, and made a sign that the square should open.

"Give up the prisoner!" he cried, angrily, stamping his foot upon the sand.

The men moved aside right and left, and Alf rushed into the square, and seized the giant negro's hand in both his own.

Dogono took the man by the hand, led him out of the square and presented him to Gollo, intimating by signs that the negro was his friend.

Then he touched the forehead of the huge darky with the queen's ring, pressed his hand and led him forward.

Gollo smiled and made a sign to his comrades, whereupon they all smiled and treated Suds with the greatest respect, although, when they had first seen that he was black, they had not been inclined to interfere between him and his captors.

The blacks withdrew, and Gollo and his squad of boys returned along the beach up the mountain through the waterfall to the valley, Alf and his dusky friend in their midst.

On the way up Alf explained to Suds how his own life had been spared, and told him all that had happened since the night he had been cast adrift.

Leaving Suds in the house which Gollo had given him, Alf hastened on, saw Tanita, and told how Suds had been rescued and who he was.

"He is black," said Tanita, "and therefore not entirely welcome here, but he is your friend, and that is enough."

"I am grateful for your favors, fair queen," said Alf, "and now let me return the ring which—"

"Keep it," said Tanita carelessly. "Its powers may aid you at a moment you least expect."

"But its value is too great to be so lightly treated. It should bring thousands of dollars in the markets of my country."

"So my lost one told me, and yet we have many such stones here and think nothing of them. I will fill your purse with them."

"These are first water diamonds," said Alf, "and most beautifully cut."

The next day Alf began to learn the language of the people from the queen herself, taking up his abode in the royal palace and having a score of boys to wait upon him.

In a month's time he could converse with a fair degree of fluency with Gollo and the others, and readily understood everything that was said to him.

One morning, when Alf walked out into his garden, he noticed that the grand entrance and stairway of the temple was draped heavily in black, and that a long streamer of the same somber hue hung from a staff on the roof, like a flag.

"What means yonder ominous signals, my young friend Gollo?" he asked.

"To-day the ballot will be taken and a youth chosen to appease the anger of the spirits of the deep and of the storms."

CHAPTER X.

THE ONE CHANCE IN ONE HUNDRED.

Forth from the garden came the queen Tanita, clad in her royal robes and attended by her women.

At the entrance to the temple, all draped in black, sh

paused for an instant, and then ascended the broad, marble steps with a haughty air.

Following at a distance of a hundred feet came Alf, arrayed in white and gold, with chains of gold around his neck, heavy bands of the same rich material upon his ankles and wrists, a circlet of rich jewels about his head and sparkling rings upon his fingers.

Upon entering the sacred edifice the queen was approached by the grand high priest, who wished to lead her to the throne.

Tanita waved him aside imperiously, waited till Alf came up, and, taking his arm, walked across the somber-looking room and took her seat on a stone bench placed upon a raised dais at one end, with the young man at her side.

Presently a strain of solemn music was heard, and the high priest, with two lesser dignitaries, came forward and stood in front of a square stone table in the center of the great hall.

Then a black curtain at the further end of the temple was thrown aside and a procession of boys entered, marching slowly toward the center of the hall.

There were one hundred of them, all handsome, manly, sturdy fellows, full of life and vigor, and giving promise of a noble manhood.

As the procession approached the stone table to the music of a solemn march, the high priest produced a bag from his girdle, opened it and handed it to his assistants.

Then, as each boy approached, the line being formed in single file, the priest held out the open bag, from which the boy took out a single round stone encased in coarse white paper.

One by one the boys passed with even and unfaltering tread, each putting his hand into the open bag, and showing no more emotion than if it had been a harmless game of chance they were playing at.

Gollo was about twentieth on the line, and as he took out the pellet, in his turn, Alf felt a shudder pass through his frame as though a chill had seized him.

One by one the boys passed on till all had drawn and the bag was empty.

They then ranged themselves in a quadruple row before the priest, there was a rustling sound and a shower of white flakes fell upon the stone floor.

Suddenly the music ceased, and the high priest, stepping forward, said in a loud voice:

"Let him who holds the black stone, the sign of the chosen one, step forth and announce himself."

One of the boys in the front rank advanced two paces and said, in clear and deliberate tones:

"Behold me, the chosen one, he who shall appease the anger of the spirits of the deep."

Gollo!

At the first word Alf felt all his strength leave him, while Tanita, when the boy had finished, uttered a piercing shriek and snrang to her feet.

"Gollo, youth of the royal guard, companion of the fair stranger from over the great waters, the choice has fallen on thee," said the high priest. "Art thou content?"

"I am!" said Gollo, proudly, while all the rest seemed to envy him.

"It is well," said the high priest, making a sign to his deputies.

They were about to step forward to bind the boy and lead him to his cell, when Tanita, no longer able to control herself, rushed from the dais, dashed aside the two priests, threw one arm around the boy, and with the other raised threateningly, cried aloud:

"Stand back, you wicked men! Not a hair of the youth's head shall be harmed. As you value life, dare not approach. This murder shall not be!"

A thrill ran through all that vast assembly at these stirring words.

The frantic woman, majestic in her wrath, looked like an angry goddess, and Alf was fairly electrified.

"I am not afraid to die, lady queen," said the boy, "though life is sweet to me."

"Nor would I fear to lose thee in a good cause," answered Tanita, "but this is a crime."

At this moment a violent gust of wind swept through the great hall, and a loud clap of thunder was heard.

A storm had suddenly arisen unperceived, and just at a moment when the wily high priest wished most for aid.

"Hark!" he cried. "The spirits will not brook being cheated of their victim. What say you, oh, people? Is the sacrifice just?"

"It is! The boy must die!" pealed forth from hundreds of throats.

A second crash resounded through the place, accompanied by a flash of brilliant lightning.

Tanita staggered back and clasped her hands to her head.

Alf sprang forward and caught her in his arms only in time to prevent her falling.

Upon the instant the two priests seized Gollo, bound him hand and foot, and hurried him away.

"Heaven save you, wretched boy!" cried Tanita, "and me, your sorrowing mother."

"My mother!" cried Gollo, in agony and surprise.

"His mother!" echoed all the people.

"Aye, your mother," cried Tanita. "You have found me but to be swept from my loving arms."

"His mother! I thought as much, and she has confessed it!" hissed the high priest, darting a look of hate at the queen, which Alf caught, though it lasted only for an instant.

Then the priests hurried away with Gollo between them, the black curtain was drawn close, the people hurried out of the temple, and Tanita, Alf and the high priest were left alone.

CHAPTER XI.

STRANGELY RESCUED.

The selection of the victim had taken place at noon; the sacrifice was to be consummated at sunset.

Leaving the queen, Alf went to the house where Suds lived, and said to the good-natured black:

"Suds, old man, you are a friend of mine. Help me out of this hobble."

"Leave it to me, Marse Alf, an' I get Marse Golly 'way f'm dem fellers."

"Tell me how you are going to manage it. I may be of assistance."

"Waal, I to' yo'. I wait outside ob de fall, in de rabine, an' when dey come along I jis' rush in, grab Marse Golly in my arms an' hook it up de dabine as fas' as I kin go. Bet yo' dey don' beat dis chile runnin'."

"You're a good fellow, Suds, and I don't know how to thank you enough."

"Den don' try, Marse Alf, but jis' leff de hull business to Suds. I get yo' frien' out, sure's preachin'."

Then Alf left Suds and returned to the palace in quest of the queen, whom he soon found.

Presently some priests appeared, and Alf and Tanita walked idly up and down, conversing in careless tones in the language of the people of the island, so as to excite no suspicion. Alf communicated to her the fact that his friend Suds was going to rescue Gollo.

Occasionally a priest or a guard passed close to them, as though to listen to their conversation, but, hearing nothing to which any importance could be attached, withdrew.

At seven o'clock the doleful notes of a bell were heard, and the procession formed.

First came a score of priests, then the grand high priest at the head of a hundred guards, in the midst of which walked Gollo, proud and manly in his bearing.

Then came Alf, the queen, her warriors, more guards and the people, scarcely a person remaining in the valley.

The procession moved slowly and in silence across the valley and toward the passage through the mountain.

Heavier grew the clouds and more brazen the sun, while upon the faces of many appeared an expression of the deepest anxiety.

Breathing became difficult, and many dropped aside and sought cool places, allowing the procession to pass.

The pass through the mountain was reached, and now the appearance of the heavens was more awful than before.

The sky was like brass, the sun was as red as blood, low mutterings could be heard in the distance, and the lowering clouds began to rise toward the zenith.

Alf and the queen had passed the veil of water when a sudden crash was heard.

The earth shook, and a mass of rock just above the fall was thrown down.

A chorus of shrieks arose, and at the instant a tall figure suddenly leaped out from behind a rock, burst in among the guards, and, seizing Gollo in his arms, bore him swiftly away.

Then there came a crash of thunder, and the earth trembled violently, the sky being black with clouds.

The side of the mountain through which the procession had passed was suddenly rent in twain, the stream turned from its bed, great blocks of granite thrown down and trees, earth and shrubs carried forward in one fierce flood.

Alf caught a momentary glimpse of the valley, through the rift, as he dashed to one side, and saw the great white palace fall to the ground like a house of cards.

Then came another shock, and he felt himself borne forward resistlessly, while cries, groans and shrieks rent the air.

He scarcely knew if he ran or was carried forward; but suddenly he saw the tall negro dash down a pass between giant boulders.

His first thought was for the queen, but upon looking around he could see nothing of her.

Suddenly he saw a dozen guards rushing upon him armed with long spears.

He followed Suds down the pass, and had just reached an open space, when there came a third and final shock, more terrible than any that had preceded it.

The pass behind him was closed by the falling masses of rock, and he was thrown to the ground insensible.

When he recovered it was night, and he was sitting on a little bank overlooking and not far from the sea.

Near him were Suds and Gollo, who were looking anxiously out upon the sea.

"Well, Suds, old fellow, are you alive?" asked Alf.

"Yaas, Marse Alf, an' I'm right glad to hear yo' speak ag'in. I war 'fraid yo' neber would."

"There has been an earthquake, Suds?"

"Yas'r, an' half de town up dere on de mountains am ruined."

"Have you seen the queen?" asked Alf of the boy.

"Tanita is dead," said Gollo, "and many of the people. Why did you snatch me from the spirits of the air? In their anger they crushed her under the fallen mountain. Better had I died than that had happened."

"What has happened could not be prevented, for it was the will of God. I would have saved Tanita, but no one can control an earthquake."

Suds could not understand Alf, as he spoke in Gollo's language, but he said presently:

"You know de ole ship I tol' yo' 'bout, Marse Alf?"

"Yes."

"Well, wher de earthquake came de water rush right ober de san', tear him up an' make a river forty foot wide 'tween de sho' an' de ship."

"That will be an advantage, for the savages cannot approach us so easily."

"Reckon dey too much scared by de earthquake."

"You say that half the town above is destroyed?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"Cause I don' go up dere while de boy took cah oo yo', an' I seen um. De palace an' all de big houses am frown down, an' lots ob de people am killed. Tell yo', Marse Alf, dere am weepin' an' wailin' up dere."

"And below, on the coast?"

"Whar de black fellahs live? Dey didn' get it so bad, 'cause deir houses is only grass an' wood, but dey war dressle scared, I reckon."

"Did you notice a stunted palm near where the old ship was, Suds?"

"Yes'r, an' dere she am now, ober dere, not far f'm de bank ob de creek."

Alf followed the direction of the negro's hand and saw the palm standing alone in the moonlight.

"Under that tree is buried a fortune," he said, "and I would give it all to leave this place."

CHAPTER XII.

ANOTHER VICTIM.

"Now, then, you idle minx, give an account of yourself. Have you done the work I laid out?"

"Oh, aunt, I couldn't do it all, it was so much, and—"

"You shiftless brat, you don't earn your salt! Take that!"

A stunning blow from the hard hand of a cross-grained middle-aged woman upon the back of a delicate child of twelve was the result of the last spleen.

There was a cry of pain and another blow, severer than the first, followed it.

"Don't you go whimpering around here, for I won't have

it. Go finish your work, and remember, you get nothing to eat till it's finished."

"Oh, aunt, I can't do it in a whole day, you know I can't."

"Don't talk back, but go and do it," and a blow enforced the command.

Poor Daisy Thorpe had been living six months with her stepfather's sister, Mrs. Adderly, and already she had greatly changed in appearance.

She had lost her pretty looks, was thin and pale, wore a perpetual look of fear on her face, and from the neat little thing she was had degenerated into a poor, untidy, shiftless-looking creature, seemingly afraid of her own shadow.

She was given the hardest kind of drudgery to perform, was denied proper food, was given cast-off, ill-fitting garments to wear, and slept in a garret, where she often lay awake all night from cold and fear.

Mrs. Adderly seemed to take a wicked delight in tormenting her, and the unhappy child had never had a kind word since she entered her aunt's household.

She had been told that Alf was dead, and her mother insane, and the thought of these dreadful events daily preyed upon her mind.

She used often to think that she would run away, but the thought that there was no one to whom she could appeal deterred her from taking this step.

Mrs. Adderly had this day given her some sewing to do, more than she could possibly accomplish in two days, working steadily from morning till night, and had threatened to punish her if the task was not performed by evening.

Poor Daisy went away after the interview just recorded and resumed her work, but presently she fell to crying and could do nothing for her tears.

She was still sobbing when Mrs. Adderly entered an hour later, the work being untouched.

"You good-for-nothing imp!" cried the woman. "I'll teach you to idle away your time in this fashion."

She had a whip in her hand, and with this she struck the child a stinging blow across the shoulders.

This was more than the girl had ever endured at the hands of her brutal tyrant.

Stung to madness by this last piece of cruelty, Daisy sprang to her feet, with eyes aflame, and leaped upon her tormentor.

In an instant the whip was in her own hand, and she rained blows, thick and fast, upon the tyrant.

At last she struck Mrs. Adderly a blow on the cheek which laid it open, and then she turned and fled.

The night was cold and raw, and she was but thinly clad, but in her heart there raged a fire which put all thought of cold and hunger to naught.

Out into the night and storm she fled, like a hunted deer, on and on through snow and sleet and wind, the one thought of escape alone animating her.

Mrs. Adderly arose, washed the blood from her cheek, bandaged the wound and sent her servant, a woman as hard-hearted as herself, to look for the missing child.

The woman returned in an hour with the news that nothing had been seen of her, and when midnight came she was still missing.

The next day the police stations were visited, but no trace of the child, dead or alive, could be found.

It was thought that she might have thrown herself in the river or have died of the cold in some obscure alley, but, although such occurrences were not infrequent, nothing was found which could determine her fate.

The next day Mrs. Adderly went to the city and had an interview with her brother in his private office at the bank.

"The child is gone," she said, abruptly, as she entered.

"Gone!" repeated Rutherford. "Do you mean that she is dead?"

"She has run away and cannot be found, dead or alive."

"You fool!" hissed Rutherford. "You should not have allowed this to happen."

"She is probably dead," said Mrs. Adderly, quietly. "You know what awful weather we have been having lately."

"Then you must find her body."

"Pshaw! What difference does it make, so long as she is dead?"

"She may be still alive."

"Well, she is not likely to return and you are rid of her."

"How do I know that?" muttered Rutherford. "Years from now she may appear and claim her share of the estate of her mother."

"That is nothing. You can prevent her getting a cent."

"How?"

"By forging a will that leaves you everything."

"H'm! You're better at scheming than I thought, but still I wish I knew that the child was dead."

"How is the other?"

"Hopelessly insane."

"Good. I suppose she will die some time?" and Mrs. Adelery smiled cruelly.

"I suppose she will!" muttered Rutherford, hoarsely.

"The sooner the better, if you want to get everything in your grasp."

"Yes," whispered the other.

"You won't forget me, I presume?"

"No."

"That is all I have to say, then, at least, for the present."

"Try and find the child, or, at least, prove that she is dead."

"You are safe enough in any event."

Nothing was seen of Daisy, however, and, as the weeks and months flew by, a firm conviction settled upon Rutherford's mind that she had been disposed of forever.

The poor mother remained in the asylum, a victim to settled melancholy, spending all the day moaning and wringing her hands, and the nights in restless, unquiet sleep.

Meanwhile the villain thrived and prospered, grew richer and richer every day, and enjoyed the respect and admiration of his fellow men.

One day a sea-faring man came into the bank and sought a private interview.

"I'd like the rest of that money, Mr. Rutherford," he muttered. "You know me, I guess. My name is Boomer, Cap'n Boomer, of the ship Hong Kong."

"To be sure," said Rutherford. "The boy was well disposed of, eh?"

"He wor fur a fac', colonel, and I'd like five thousand on it."

"Five thousand! It was to be five hundred, you old shark!"

"The price has rose," said the old villain, with a wicked twinkle. "It's five thousand now or I give the yarn to the papers. They like to get hold of such stories."

"You old Shylock!" hissed Rutherford. "Well, I'll give you my check for it."

"No, you won't! I'll take it in gold. There's no identifyin' that."

Ten minutes later Captain Boomer left the bank with a canvas bag secured to his belt under his coat.

"Conscience has got ahead o' that feller," he muttered, "and I'm good for a nice little livin' out of him as long as I live. I won't forget to draw my rations, you can bet your boots!"

CHAPTER XIII.

A TEMPTING OFFER.

Six months had passed since the catastrophe on the mountain, and Alf, Suds, and Gollo were living quietly on the ancient ship.

It was hard and fast on the bottom, and though a stream of water ran between it and the shore, there was a high bar on the other side and the tides could not affect it, unless it was to wash in more sand and fix it more firmly in its hard bed.

Since the escape from the mountain the little party had not returned to the wonderful city in the clouds, nor had any of its inhabitants visited them.

The only persons they had seen were King Ogumbo's subjects, but these never ventured too near, and a careful watch was always kept on board the old vessel for fear the savages might invade their retreat.

At first Gollo had expressed a desire to return to the mountains, but Alf had spoken so earnestly against it that the boy, in his great love for his friend, had obeyed his wishes.

As time flew on he lost his desire to return, and seemed willing to follow Alf to the end of the world.

Suds he only tolerated because Alf liked him, and because he was not like the other blacks he had seen, but it was easily seen that his early prejudices were still strong within him, and that probably nothing would ever entirely efface them.

The cabin of the old ship was found to be roomy and comfortable, and formed a pleasant home for the young men, while Suds found quarters forward.

As to getting ashore, they were at first obliged to swim, but after Alf had been chased by a ravenous shark, which

Gollo killed, after a struggle, it was thought best to find some other means of reaching shore.

Suds, with the aid of a loose plank, ripped off a number of boards from the vessel's side, and these were made into a raft, which served quite well for a time.

Afterward Alf got two stone axes from one of the blacks, and with these they cut down a number of trees and also secured planks, together with nails, which they drew from the timbers of the old ship.

There was plenty of iron about the wreck, and Alf thought it ought to be put to some account, and he therefore set his wits to work and tried to remember all he had ever read about iron working.

The first thing to do was to build a forge, and for this charcoal was necessary, but Suds knew how to make a kiln, and his charcoal was turned out successfully, greatly to his satisfaction.

Gollo caught a goat in a pit trap he had built, and the skin was used for the bellows, the nozzle being formed of a reed with the pith driven out.

The forge was a rude one, the bellows being weighted with stones and the anvil a boulder, but after a while the amateur blacksmiths were able to do better.

Knives, hammers, hatchets, an anvil, and other needful articles were made, and thus with tools at hand the three friends got on wonderfully.

"The next thing we want is a spade," said Alf, and the next day the article was turned out, big, heavy and rather clumsy, to be sure, but a spade for all that.

Suds fitted a handle to it and sharpened the blade by rubbing it on a stone with sand and water in judicious proportions, making a very serviceable implement of it.

As to the question of food, the islands had supplied them with all they needed, for there were turtle, shellfish, fruit, wild goats, and pigs, birds and now and then a wild rabbit.

At first everything had to be baked in hot coals but with the iron age came pots, kettles and pans, and then pannikins, jugs, plates, and jars, made from clay, a fine bed of which was found on the islands near the spring.

When their clothes wore out they bartered some of their iron for cloth from Ogumbo's people, and afterwards wove their own grass, palm fibre, cocoanut husk and goat hair, Gollo being an adept at this work.

At the end of six months, therefore, we find them living on the old vessel in a state of comfort bordering on luxury, and, but for the desire to return to their distant homes, happy and contented.

The jewels which Alf had brought from the city on the mountain had been put away carefully in a cupboard in the cabin, and now the thought of a large amount of treasure which he had buried came into his head.

There had been too much to occupy them to think of this before, but now Alf determined to dig it up and take it on board the old vessel.

One night, as the three sat on deck in the moonlight, he made known his plan, and both Gollo and Suds approved of it.

Gollo, by the way, now learned to speak English quite fluently, and this made conversation between the three much easier, as Suds had never been able to master the island dialect.

Early the next morning they took the raft ashore, moored it to a stake fastened deep in the sand, and set out for a stunted palm where the treasure had been buried.

Suds carried the spade, and Alf was armed with a hatchet with which to cut away the roots of the palm should they be in the way.

When they reached the tree the big negro stuck his spade into the soil and turned over the sod which for years had not been disturbed.

Having removed the turf for a space of six feet square, he began to dig down, throwing the earth out rapidly and piling it up in front of him.

So engrossed were they all in the work, Alf having taken the spade to give Suds a chance to rest, and Gollo in turn relieving his friend, that they noticed nothing else, and were greatly surprised when they heard a deep voice say in the language of the islanders:

"Is it thus that the heir to the throne employs his time? A prince with a spade in his hand is not a pleasant sight."

Alf and Gollo looked up quickly and saw the priest and half a dozen of the royal guards from the city above standing before them.

"No honorable employment should be displeasing, O priest," said Gollo, striking the spade in the ground.

"There is no need for a prince to put his hand to the spade," returned the priest. "You are the heir to the throne and the people wait for your coming. Return, Prince Gollo, and reign in glory and in might."

"Why have you not sought me before?" asked Gollo.

"The people thought you dead, and great was their sorrow. Now we have found you, they are ready to welcome you back amongst them. The palace shall be rebuilt, the city shall rise again and great will be your name in the land."

"You must not return with them," said Alf, excitedly. "They will poison you, hired assassins will stab you in your sleep, you will be spirited away and left to die and rot in some noisome dungeon. You shall not go! It is throwing away your life to do so."

Gollo was visibly affected by this passionate appeal, and placing his hand within that of Alf's, he said:

"Alfred, my friend, fear not that I will place myself in the power of these bad men. I have but temporized with them, and in the meantime we must leave here and seek a refuge elsewhere."

"We have two days to do this in, if you think they will not come till then."

"They will come at the time appointed and bring a noble escort."

"Merely the bait which is to tempt you," said Alf. "I had rather trust myself with Ogambo and his blacks than return to the mountains."

"Le's go abo'd de ole ship," said Duds; "dat am de bes' place fo' us arter all."

"That is my own plan," said Gollo, much to the surprise of Alf.

CHAPTER XIV.

OGAMBO TO THE RESCUE.

The morning was bright and clear, the waves crept lazily up the beach and all nature seemed at rest.

It was the day appointed for Gollo's return to the mountain, but the escort had not appeared, and neither the boy nor his friends could be seen.

Presently, from out the grove came Alf, Gollo, and Suds, walking toward the beach.

"I see nothing of them yet," said Alf, looking toward the mountain.

Presently Gollo pointed toward the heights and said:

"They come."

A large body of men could be seen coming down the mountain, being presently lost to sight in a grove.

After an interval they appeared again, were again lost to sight, and finally appeared from out a wood and came directly toward the little group.

"Now is our time," said Gollo, jumping upon the raft.

Alf cast off the rope and Suds pushed the craft into the stream with a long pole.

All three then took poles and paddles and steered toward the ship.

By this time the men from the mountain had reached the stunted palm.

The leaders uttered loud cries, the men brandishing their spears, and the whole body came dashing toward the beach.

The raft reached the ship, and the three friends climbed on board as the soldiers came rushing down.

A score of swimmers plunged into the water and struck out for the ship.

Suddenly a number of sharp fins could be seen cutting the waves, and then a school of sharks rushed at the men in the water.

Other swimmers had joined the first party, but now the water was dyed with blood, and more sharks rushed in to take part in the awful feast.

No more dared to enter the water.

Suddenly there was a fierce shout, and Ogamba, Dagono, and two hundred fierce warriors rushed out of the woods and attacked the men from the mountains.

The contest was short, for in a few seconds the enemy was driven back and thrown into the sea.

"Look!" cried Alf, "the mountain party is retreating."

This was indeed so, the high priest and many of the bravest men having been slain.

A retreat was hastily sounded, and the survivors made haste to leave a spot which had been so fatal to them.

Ogambo and his men pursued them for some distance, but Alf hauled down the red flag and the slaughter ceased.

Their enemies had been driven away, and those who were killed were stripped by the blacks of their dazzling armor and jewels.

Alf, fearing that Gollo would be killed, had gone boldly to Ogambo and had demanded that he help them in case of need, promising as a reward part of the treasure beneath the stunted palm.

He had made the dusky monarch a present of several gold chains and a dozen bangles, besides rings enough to go on every one of his fingers, these gift greatly pleasing his ugly majesty.

He had given the aid promised, and now Alf gave him an iron knife and another gold chain, Ogambo expressing his pleasure by saying:

"The white man who comes from over the great water is a great king and chief. He has given Ogambo the victory over the men of the mountain and has destroyed the power of their queen. He shall take twenty wives from among Ogambo's fairest maidens, and shall have a hundred slaves to do his bidding. Let him take up his abode with us, and one day he shall be king over all the land."

"Ogambo is good and great," replied Alf. "His arm is like oak, his breath is fire, his words are thunder. The white stranger from beyond the seas loves him, but voices from across the water call the stranger and one day he must go away."

"It is well; the white stranger is wise," said the king, and then he and his soldiers departed.

CHAPTER XV.

A FACE AT THE WINDOW.

Mr. Rutherford, the banker, sat in his cozy study in his elegant residence surrounded with every luxury, lazily smoking a choice cigar and reading the latest novel.

Five years had passed since his stepson had sailed away to China, and in that time his wealth greatly increased.

His wife was reported to have died, and he was her sole heir under her will, her children being dead, so that he had come into a snug fortune.

Proof of the death of Alfred and Daisy had not been wanting, Captain Boomer swearing to Alf's death, and a body picked up in the river having been identified as that of the little girl.

As Rutherford sat reading that evening, a knock was heard at the library door, and at his summons a liveried footman entered and handed his master a card.

"Philo Harden, eh?" muttered the banker. "Show the gentleman in, James. What the mischief can he want?" he added, under his breath.

The footman bowed and retired, and presently ushered in Dr. Harden, of the Shady Side Retreat.

"Well, doc, what can I do for you? Will you have a glass of wine or a cigar? Help yourself."

Dr. Philo Harden walked over to a little buffet, helped himself to a glass of wine, lighted one of Rutherford's cigars and sat down.

"Bad weather out," he muttered, presently, as he puffed out a cloud of smoke.

"So I believe."

"Wouldn't want to be out in it if I wasn't well wrapped up end all that."

"No, I suppose not."

"Particularly if I was in any way delicate."

"What are you driving at?" cried Rutherford, petulantly. "You haven't come here just to smoke and drink and talk about the weather, I know."

"No, I haven't," muttered Harden.

"What do you want, more money?"

"Well, I didn't come after that, though I never refuse a present."

"What did you come for, then?"

"Well, your wife escaped this evening."

"Escaped!" gasped the banker.

"Yes—clean got away, and there's no trace of her. Very cleverly managed, too. That's the worst of it. No insane person could have done it, shrewd and cunning as they are."

"It was your business to keep her insane," growled the other. "You were paid well enough to do it."

"I thought she was, but she must have been shamming."

"Confound you! I told you to get rid of her two years ago."

"Well, I thought she would drop off of her own accord."

"And now she's free?"

"Yes."

"Well, you must retake her, that's all, and have no fuss about it. She goes under another name, don't she?"

"Yes."

"You want to keep it out of the papers."

"H'm! I think I know my business," chuckled Dr. Philo Harden, softly. "You can't tell me anything about that. If she comes here you will let me know at once, I suppose?"

"You don't think she will, do you?" muttered Rutherford, uneasily.

"I would imagine she would let people know that she was about," said Harden, "though she would probably take good care that you didn't lay hands on her."

"She must be found at once!" hissed the banker.

"The weather isn't very pleasant outside, and I don't think she had any too much clothing on."

"You think that she may freeze to death?" asked the other, anxiously.

"It's not unlikely, but I thought best to tell you what had happened, so that if she did come walking in on you, you couldn't say I hadn't warned you."

"Confound you! what do you mean by talking of it in that cold-blooded fashion?"

"Oh, you don't like it, eh?" and Dr. Philo Harden laughed, took another glass of wine and put on his hat. "I won't trouble you any more, though, and I'll keep a watch for her. If she does come here you'll let me know, of course?"

"Yes," growled his host.

"All right, then. Good-night," and Philo Harden, M.D., walked out chuckling and rubbing his hands.

He had been gone scarcely half an hour when Rutherford heard the sharp clang of the doorbell, and, a moment later, in walked his sister, Mrs. Adderly.

"I told James I would show myself in," she said, "and as it's tolerably late now I told him to have a room prepared."

"Well, what ill news have you to tell now?" snapped her brother, as she sat down, took off her wraps and bonnet and shook the snow off them.

"How do you know I have bad news?" she asked, kicking off her overshoes.

"Because you always bring it, that's why."

"Well, then, to be brief, one of your stepchildren has turned up!"

"Not Alf!" gasped Rutherford, turning white.

"Alf? No, indeed; he was drowned years ago. Daisy."

"H'm! you are responsible for that," said the brother, with a snarl. "You had no business to let her get away from you."

"I suppose not, but that's neither here nor there. The girl is alive, and will be apt to make trouble."

"What is she doing?"

"Doing her best to go to perdition," said the sister. "I saw her in very questionable society this afternoon, and two-thirds intoxicated."

"H'm! She'll kill herself at that rate in a year or so," muttered Rutherford, expressing no pity, however, at the poor child's downfall.

"Scarcely that." was the answer. "She's only sixteen. She's on the stage, I believe, or at least she sings in low concert rooms and calls herself Daisy Thorpe."

"The mischief she does!" muttered the brother. "Will money silence her?"

"Possibly."

"Then see she gets some one else to do it. If Lockett & Wheeler get hold of this, they'll make no end of trouble."

"Lawyers usually do," said the sister, "and the only thing to do is for you to see her before they do."

"I'll attend to the matter at once."

"By the way, said the sister, carelessly, "I needed a new outfit, furs, silks and the like, and I've had the bill sent to you."

"Didn't I tell you I wouldn't pay——"

"Yes, of course, but you didn't mean it," she answered with a laugh. "This piece of information is worth something, I suppose?"

"Yes, I suppose it is," growled her brother, in anything but a good-natured tone.

"Well, I'll leave you to your reflections and your cigar," she said, presently.

Then he lighted another cigar, took a glass of sherry, to settle his nerves, drew himself in front of the fire and resumed his novel.

He was destined to have a continuance of his troubles, however, for he had not read more than a page before he heard the bell ring, and shortly afterward some sort of altercation in the hall.

Then the door was thrown open, and there entered Captain Boomer, soaked with rain and snow, tipsy and very quarrelsome.

"This impudent scullion wasn't goin' to let me in, Rutherford, old shipmate," said the captain, "but I swore to it as how I knew you'd want to see me," and the old fellow tumbled into an easy-chair and dashed his hat on the floor.

"It is all right, James, you can go," said the master of the house.

"Course it's all right," muttered the skipper.

"Now, then, what do you want?"

"More dividends, colonel, for holdin' my tongue 'bout young Alf Thorpe."

"Plague on you for an old leech! I'll give you no more money, not a penny."

"Oh, yes, you will, colonel, and plenty of it when I tell—My heaven! what's that?"

At that instant one of the window shades flew up with a whir, and there, on the other side of the glass, framed by the rich silk and lace draperies, could be seen the face and form of Alf Thorpe, true to life.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TREASURE DISCOVERED.

Two years and more had passed since the death of Tanita, and Alf and his friends still lived on board the old ship.

The water, which on the day of the earthquake had divided the ship from the shore, had in the meantime encroached more and more upon the land, until now the old vessel lay at low tide a quarter mile from shore.

There had been no effort made to secure the buried treasure under the stunted palm since the first attempt.

There seemed so little chance of getting away from the island and it looked like a mockery to be hunting for buried treasure, and Alf had abandoned the search.

One day Gollo came to him as he lay dozing in a hammock swung on the deck of the old ship, and said:

"There will be trouble among the people of King Ogumbo before long, and it will be best for us to look to our defences."

"Do you apprehend any danger to us?"

"Yes, if the king dies."

"I knew he was sick, but I did not think he was near to death."

"I don't believe he can live more than a few days, and perhaps only one. If he dies, Dogono will seize the throne and then there will be trouble. He hates you and would do anything to injure you."

"I do not fear him," said Alf, carelessly.

"Why do you not seize the throne yourself, when Ogumbo dies and thus defy this son of his?"

I do not care to be king over this savage people, to be constantly in danger of foes within and without. Dogono would never rest till I was dead."

"You can order his execution the moment you become king."

"No, no; I will not shed blood simply to satisfy my ambition," returned Alf, with a look of disgust.

"It may be necessary to do so to preserve your own life. Dogono will not let you live here in peace, once the old king dies."

"I care little for life if I am always to remain here," sighed Alf. "There is no justice in heaven, or I would have escaped from the island long since, and would have saved my poor mother from the clutches of that villain."

"You do not know that she has suffered," said Gollo, to whom Alf had told his story.

"I feel that she has, for that man cared only for her fortune, and I know he would do anything to obtain it. If I was only home I would protect her from him."

"And you have abandoned the search for the buried treasure," said Gollo. "What can you do against this villain, as you think him, if you have no money?"

"Nothing," muttered Alf. "You are right. I must get wealth if I wish to succeed. I will resume the search to-day."

It was then in the forenoon, and immediately after the noon meal Alf, Suds and Gollo went ashore on the raft, taking spades and axes with them.

"Wha' yo' gwine to do, Marse Alf?" asked Suds, as they stepped ashore.

"Going to look for the buried treasure," said Alf, "and this time we must find it."

"Reckon we hab trubble of some kin' jis' like we hab befo',"

said Suds. "Reckon we neber get dat gol' wifout lots ob trubble."

"If a body never did anything for fear of trouble, he would accomplish but little," said Gollo, whereat Alf laughed.

"Very philosophical," he said, "but Suds is fond of trouble, I think, so let's get to work."

Taking the tools to the old tree, they renewed the work which had been so suddenly interrupted more than a year before.

There were three spades, and all hands took hold and began to dig, each working in a space six feet in length.

They had dug to a depth of four feet, when Alf, who had the middle section, struck his spade on something hard.

"Here it is!" he cried, as he threw out another spadeful of earth.

The others joined in, and in a few moments a small iron box was unearthed.

The giant negro smashed in the top with a crowbar, and a look at the contents was obtained.

There were gold vessels and ornaments, jewels in great variety, and a considerable amount of broad gold coins as big as a double eagle or piece of twenty dollars.

They concluded to secure the treasure they had already found and then returned to the search.

Each of the treasure hunters then took as much as he could carry and went to the raft, where they deposited their burdens, and then returned for more.

Two additional trips sufficed to transport all the treasure to the raft, and then the party carried their find to the ship, where it was placed beside that which Alf already possessed.

The next day things remained in the same quiet state, and Alf suggested that they go ashore and search for more of the buried treasure.

The suggestion was adopted, and all hands were soon in the pits digging away with all their might.

They had been working fully two hours, when Alf struck some metallic substance with his spade, and the greatest excitement ensued.

All three worked at that spot, and before long a second chest was discovered, directly under the old palm.

It required the united efforts of all to drag the chest out, and then Alf discovered that there was still another behind it.

Suddenly a loud voice was heard, and Alf and Gollo, with blanched faces, leaped out upon the ground.

No one was seen, but the sounds, which seemed to come from the mountain, were continued.

"Dere's a fight goin' on up dere," said Suds, who had joined the others, "an' dese black fellahs am lickin' de white folks on de mount'n."

They returned to the hole they had dug, smashed open the rusty caskets, and discovered treasures similar to those they had already found.

The contents of the two chests were taken to the vessel, this work keeping the three friends employed till dark.

Then, as they sat on deck enjoying the cool breezes of the evening, a bright light suddenly appeared on the summit of the mountain.

This was presently followed by the other fires, till all the mountain seemed ablaze.

Shouts of triumph could be distinctly heard, and then lights appeared on the side of the mountain and seemed to be coming down, till at last a long line of them was made out.

Brighter grew the fires on the mountain top, and now wailing sounds could be heard as the procession of lights on the slopes swelled to greater proportions.

Now and then a crash could be heard, and then the fires would shoot high up into the heavens, showers of sparks falling all around.

"My people are destroyed," muttered Gollo, sadly. "They have perished from the face of the earth. The warriors are slain, the young men are captives, the women are slaves. What more is there to live for?"

All this was learned from a messenger of the king who came to the shore to command those on the old wreck to submit at once or take the consequences.

"Tell your base, cruel monarch," said Alf, "that we defy him to do his worst, that we will not yield and that if he comes here with his soldiers we will use all our magic upon him and sweep him forever from the face of the earth."

"You are dogs!" shouted the messenger, "and when the king hears your words he will treat you as dogs and throw you to the sharks!"

Then he went away in great anger, while Alf began to form a plan of escape.

"If the king sends any great force against us," he said, "we can do nothing. They will come in canoes and attack us on all sides. We must leave this place at once."

"It is our only chance," said Alf. "The raft can be strengthened, and will carry us away safely."

Before the work of enlarging the raft could be begun, however, a large party of natives could be seen approaching in canoes, there being at least a score of these vessels, each containing from a dozen to thirty men.

"We are lost!" cried Gollo, as the canoes drew nearer, the men uttering loud cries.

"No!" cried Alf, loudly, as he looked out to sea. "Look there! We are saved!"

A gallant ship, under full sail, was just rounding a point of the island and was standing toward shore.

"Glory to goodness!" cried Suds. "We're saved arter all! Wait till I h'ist de signal."

Preparations had long since been made for just such an event, and Suds now hoisted a large signal flag to the top of the mast, where it caught the breeze and floated out to its full length, so that it could be seen for miles.

Suddenly, as the savages swept up the creek in their canoes, three boats were lowered from the ship's side, and a ringing cheer went up.

Alf answered with a shout, while Suds climbed up the mast and waved a large piece of white cloth as an additional signal.

Suddenly a puff of smoke was seen to leave the ship's bows, and then a booming sound was heard as a shot flew over the water and struck the foremost canoe.

It was knocked to pieces, half of its occupants killed and the rest thrown into the water.

The savages were terror-stricken, having never heard the sound of firearms and not knowing what to make of them.

Presently another shot from the little cannon on board the ship struck another of the canoes, demolishing it and killing half the men in it.

Many sprang into the water and fell a prey to the sharks which now began to swarm in great numbers.

Suddenly another report was heard from the ship, and a mass of old iron flew toward the largest canoe.

Dagorno was struck by a chance shot from the boats and killed, while the canoe was torn asunder by the hurling missiles, the men being thrown out.

A great outcry arose as the king fell into the water, and the canoes all headed for the beach as fast as possible.

A few more shots were fired from the boats and then the pursuit was abandoned, as the natives were utterly routed.

One of the boats then pulled to the old ship, and Alf recognized his old messmate of the Hong Kong, the sailor Bill.

"Dere am Bill; sho's yo' born," cried Suds. "Bress my heart, how t'ings do come about."

"What, can this be young Thorpe?" said Bill, as he stepped aboard. "Yes, so it is, and old Suds, too, our cook. I thought you fellows were both dead."

"Am dat de ol' Hong Kong, Marse Bill?" asked the former cook.

"No, that is the ship Triumph, and I'm her first mate. Times has gone well with me in the last three or four years."

"Where is Captain Boomer now?" asked Alf.

"Cruising around as usual. Moore has a vessel of his own now."

"It war him as frowed Marse Alf overbo'd dat stormy night," said Suds. "I see him do it, an' one day when I meets him agin I'll tell him ob it."

"Well, you must come aboard," said Bill, now Mr. White, mate of the Triumph. "We were driven out of our course, but, seeing this place, we determined to put in for wood and water, and a lucky thing it was for you that we discovered these wretches in time. We reckoned you were castaways, but I never expected to see two of my old messmates again."

Alf then hurriedly informed Bill of the treasure they had found, and promised him a liberal reward if he would help them take it on board.

CHAPTER XVII.

WORTH A MILLION.

It was even as Gollo had said, and when morning dawned, the city on the mountain was in ruins, and the people, or those who survived, were the slaves of Dagorno, now king of the island.

Rich treasures had been brought from the mountain, and the palaces and lordly dwellings put to the torch.

An arrangement was speedily made, and the treasure was put aboard the vessel.

It was put away in chests and stored in the hold, the ship being still on her outward voyage, so that there would be still a long time to wait before he would reach home.

He and Suds took their places in the crew, Gollo receiving instructions from Alf, so that by the time they reached China he was nearly as good a sailor as his teacher.

From China Alf took a steamer to England, taking Gollo with him, and here his jewels, golden ornaments and other valuables were turned into ready money, and our hero found himself worth no less than a million.

A month later Alf Thorpe and his faithful friends, Gollo and Suds, arrived in New York and went to the best hotel in the city.

Five years had passed since he had left the place, and Alf was anxious to learn what had happened in his absence.

He went to his mother's house, but the light of a street lamp showed him the face of Captain Boomer, his old enemy.

When the door had closed upon the skipper Alf ran lightly up the steps, leaped upon a balcony running half around the house and paused before the window of the library, the location of which he well knew.

Here it was that while endeavoring to listen to the conversation between his stepfather and the captain the rattling of the window had suddenly caused the curtain to fly up and reveal him to the astonished gaze of the two villains.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A TRAITOR'S DEFIANCE.

For an instance Mr. Rutherford was staggered as he saw the familiar face and form of his wronged stepson standing outside the window in the storm.

"My heavens, the dead comes to life!" he gasped.

Then he dashed forward and threw up the sash.

A gust of wind drove the snow in upon him, and nearly put out the light.

"There's nothing there, colonel," said the captain, taking hold of his hand.

"Nothing!" muttered Rutherford. "As I live, I saw Alfred Thorpe standing outside."

"Guess you only thought so, colonel," said the skipper, persuasively, as he shut the window, pulled down the shade, drew the heavy curtains, and led Rutherford back to his seat by the fire.

Rutherford did not consider the appearance of Alf due to supernatural causes.

After the first shock, he came to the conclusion that Alf was alive, that the captain had not kept his agreement and had been levying blackmail ever since, trusting that Alf would never return.

"You hound!" growled Rutherford, "the boy never died and you have been lying to me all these years. You have certainly made enough money out of me to have served me faithfully."

The skipper was now thoroughly sober, but he did not doubt for an instant that what he had seen was Alf's ghost.

"Well, he escaped death in some manner, and has returned. Put him out of my way this time or I will denounce you as a blackmailer."

The skipper saw that Rutherford was determined, and, greatly puzzled, he left the house, muttering to himself:

"If I can lay a ghost it's more'n most folks kin do, and I don't feel like trying it. It's his conscience that's troubling him, but then, I saw the thing, too, and my conscience is clear enough and that's what bothers me."

There was very little sleep or rest for the banker that night, and when he appeared at his counting-room the next morning, the clerks all noticed his careworn looks.

Business at the bank had scarcely gotten under way when an elegant carriage drawn by two magnificent grays drove up and halted at the front door.

On the box sat a huge, coal-black driver, dressed in a rich livery with a heavy fur collar about his neck, big fur driving gloves on his hands, and a costly robe thrown about him.

The carriage door opened and a young man of deep olive complexion and handsome, clear-cut features, stepped lightly out, assisting a gentleman slightly older than himself to alight.

The latter was tall and very handsome, with a face tanned

by exposure to the sun, a small brown mustache, and curly hair and was evidently about twenty-four years old.

He ascended the steps leading to the bank, his companion preceding him and opening the doors for him.

The few customers that chanced to be in the bank turned to look at him and wonder what he must be worth, and who he was, for no one seemed to know him.

"I wish to see Mr. Rutherford on business," the stranger said, as he walked up to the door of the banker's private office before which stood a porter.

Rutherford was seated at his desk when he heard the door open, looked up, and saw two strangers enter.

The taller of the two threw aside his heavy fur coat and gloves, handed them to the younger, who remained in the background, and advanced.

"I do not think we need any introduction," said the young man with the bronzed face and slight mustache, as he took a seat directly in front of Rutherford.

"So, you have returned, have you, Alfred?" asked the banker, with something like a sigh, as he glanced uneasily at the young fellow.

"Yes, and worth a million, as I promised you," and as he said this, Alfred picked up an ivory paper knife and toyed with it.

"H'm! I believe I do remember something about it," muttered the other uneasily, thinking of the day, now five years gone, when he had last seen Alf in that very room.

"I want an account of the last five years," said Alf, suddenly snapping the knife in two in his hands, and throwing the fragments on the floor. "Where is my mother?"

"Dead!" said Rutherford, with a sudden gasp.

"How did she die?" asked Alf, coldly.

"You were reported dead, and she never got over the shock it gave her."

"Where is my sister?"

"Dead," muttered Rutherford, wondering if Alf had seen Daisy since her sudden reappearance. "How long have you been in town?"

"Only a day or so. I would have called on you yesterday, but business prevented."

"Where have you been?" asked the other, desirous of changing the subject. "You have picked up a fortune in China, I suppose?"

"Yes, part of it. I have been in London, as well. How long did you say my mother had been dead?"

"Three years. You were too busy to write, I suppose?" added the other, with a sneer.

"And my sister?"

"The same time."

"I was reported dead, you say?"

"Yes."

"Did your friend, Captain Boomer, tell you about it?"

"He gave me the particulars; I had heard the bare facts before that," answered Rutherford, carelessly. "We all believed you to be dead."

"You paid Boomer the balance of the money you had promised him, I suppose?"

"What do you mean?" said the banker, in a quiet tone. "What money was that?"

"The money he was to have for getting rid of me. The mate carried out his designs, but that made no difference, I suppose, so long as the thing was done."

"You are jesting," muttered Rutherford, shifting his position.

"I am not," said Alf, quietly. "You paid Captain Boomer to have me put out of the way. You killed my mother and you drove my sister from home. I told you I would crush you when I came home, and I intend to do it. You have been warned, so beware."

So saying, Alf rose, put on his coat, left the banker's office, got into his carriage with his companion and was driven rapidly away.

CHAPTER XIX.

OUT OF THE FIRE.

The glare of the lights, the loud music, the gaudy dresses, the gorgeous scenery and the Thalia Varieties, a popular house of amusement among a certain class who nightly flocked thither, filled it from stage to doors.

An olio performance filled in the first part of the evening, while a silly burlesque brought the entertainment to a close.

Just now a newcomer, and a popular one, filled the Thalia Varieties to overflowing every night, and greatly added to the manager's private funds.

A rather pretty, very saucy and elegantly-dressed young lady disported herself every night in the glittering pageant of "Aladdin and the Forty Thieves, or the Adventures of Sinbad and Cinderella; a Fairy Hodge-Podge Melodrama," as the house bills had it.

The curtain had just risen upon the burlesque when two gentlemen were shown into a box on the right of the stage, the only one vacant, by the way, as it was usually reserved for the manager and his family.

One of the newcomers was a young man of twenty-four, the other a boy of nineteen. Both were well-dressed and had an air of distinction entirely different from that of the people around them.

A score of girls dressed in something like an approach to Chinese costumes, danced on as the curtain rose, and sang a spirited chorus, after which they danced off again, and Aladdin, the bad boy of the village, made his appearance.

Aladdin was dressed in pink tights and bronze slippers, very short trunks and jacket of olive silk, a broad, red silk sash, a pointed cap of olive velvet, and a heavily braided pigtail, hanging down to his waist.

He, or rather she, for this was the young lady star, danced on her toes down to the footlights, kissed her fingers to the boys in the gallery, kicked one slippered foot as high as the tassel on her pointed cap, stood still for an instant, and then turned a dozen handsprings, one after the other, all the way up and down the stage.

Thunders of applause greeted this exhibition of gymnastics, and then the poor girl made a signal to the leader and started off on a rattling song, full of local allusions, slang phrases, and rather poor wit.

The older of the two strangers in the manager's box was hidden by the heavy draperies, but the other remained in full view.

"It is she, alas!" muttered the elder. "I was not mistaken. Oh, my poor Daisy, to think that you have come to this! Better be dead, indeed, as that villain said."

The star was Daisy Thorpe, the dashing soubrette; the young gentleman in the manager's box was Alfred, her brother.

Boisterous laughter and coarse jokes greeted the girl as she finished her song and more verses were called for.

The poor thing looked tired and worn already, though her work had just begun.

Presently Aladdin appeared in scantier raiment than before and drilled a score or more of girls, whose costumes seemed to consist chiefly of red hosiery and glittering shields.

Aft turned away in disgust and Goll said to him:

"Are these the amusements of an enlightened people? I hardly think that even the ignorant and cruel Ogambo would have tolerated such an exhibition."

Alf smiled, and at that moment the red-legged warriors filed off and Aladdin was left alone.

She came forward to sing, but as the first notes left her throat she suddenly caught sight of Alf looking at her from the box.

Shame, remorse, surprise, delight, and a dozen different emotions swept across her brain.

The poor thing looked tired and worn already, though her self down on a cozy lounge, and cried angrily:

"Alf alive and in this place! Could he not have seen me somewhere else? Oh, I am ashamed and disgusted with everything!"

Then she sprang up, threw off her helmet and feathers, tossed her red cloak into a corner and dropped her sword on the floor.

"I won't go on again while he is here," she muttered.

Suddenly she uttered a loud scream and fled from the room.

In her haste she had overturned a lamp on her dressing-table, and already the light draperies around her were in flames.

Scarcely knowing what she did, she seized the red cloak she had just worn and dragged it after her as she ran.

The audience was clamoring impatiently for her return, when she suddenly leaped upon the stage, crying in shrill tones:

"The theatre is on fire! Fly for your lives!"

The cloak in her hands was now a mass of flame, and the poor girl was in the greatest peril, though she knew it not.

"Fire, fire!" cried some one behind the scenes.

"Fire!" echoed the crowd, and a panic at once ensued.

In an instant Alf had leaped upon the stage from the box and thrown his great fur coat around the little form of his unhappy sister.

"Fear not, sister, I have come to save you, to take you away from this dreadful place," he whispered.

He tramped out the fire, caught Daisy in his arms, leaped back into the box and bade Gollo clear the way before them.

The manager rushed upon the stage, followed by the stage carpenter and scene-shifters, and shouted out that the danger was over, and requested the people to keep their seats.

A rush of flame from the wings and a cloud of smoke from below belied his words, and the crowd hurried away like mad.

Many were trampled underfoot—doors were burst open, windows were torn out and every avenue of escape sought.

The fire was spreading, and now the terrified actors hurriedly left the theatre, some without changing their stage dresses.

Alf hurried out by a private passage leading behind the scenes, Gollo keeping the way clear till they reached the street.

Then he hurried off to where Suds was waiting with the carriage, had it brought quickly around, and summoned Alf.

Putting his half-crazed sister on the seat and bidding her be of good cheer, Alf hurried into the theatre and endeavored to extinguish the flames.

He saw that this was now impossible, and he helped to get all the stage people out, and to clear the house as well.

He diverted the rush from the front and turned a stream of humanity toward the side and box exits, thus preventing great loss of life.

The fire spread rapidly, but so effectively did Alf and the others work that the large audience got out in safety, though there were many who were badly bruised, and several prostrated by fright.

The police and firemen had arrived in good time, and all was done to prevent a panic that was possible.

The crowd having been gotten out in safety, the people were kept back so that the firemen could work and prevent the fire from spreading to other buildings.

The theatre was doomed, and the whole interior was soon one mass of flames, but, thanks to one brave man, there was no loss of life.

When he saw that he could do no more Alf entered his carriage, spoke a few tender words to Daisy, and drove away.

"Thank heaven, I have found you!" he said. "That is all I care for, and henceforth we shall never part."

CHAPTER XX.

ALL IN A WEEK.

A week had passed and Rutherford had not seen Alf since their first interview.

Only a week, and yet many things had happened.

In the first place, several Western banks, in which Rutherford was more or less interested, had suspended payment or had failed, the failures affecting the New York bank which held considerable of their paper and lost money in consequence.

Then the Thalia Varieties theatre building had belonged to Rutherford, and as there was no insurance, the fire caused him a loss of thousands.

Next, one of his most trusted employees had decamped, taking with him several thousands of dollars belonging to the bank.

Within the week, also, a line of steamers, carrying freight to and from Europe, in which he had embarked considerable money, lost two of their best boats by being burned at their wharves, the insurance policies having run out the day previous and not having been renewed.

Again, a sudden fall in stocks caused a loss to Rutherford of many thousands, and just at a time when fate appeared to frown.

"I suppose that young fool would say that all these things have happened on his return only in the way of retribution," laughed the banker.

"H'm! I am rich enough to stand a hundred such, and never fret. Let him try to crush me if he will. He will find that I am stronger than he thinks."

However, the heaviest blow was yet to fall.

His son, a boy between four and five, in whom all his hopes centered and to whom he intended to leave his wealth, suddenly disappeared.

The nurse had been with him all the evening, and had left him for a few minutes only when, upon returning to her charge, she found that he had disappeared.

She gave the alarm, but no trace of the boy could be found.

No suspicious persons had been seen about the house, there were no open windows or doors, and yet the child had utterly disappeared.

Rutherford put detectives to work on the case, but they were unable to find the slightest clue to the child's whereabouts.

"If I was sure that Thorpe had a hand in this business," muttered the banker, "I'd drag him before the courts, rich as he is, but the child was born after he went away, and he can know nothing about it."

Two days after the disappearance of his child his house caught fire in the night, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the master and servants escaped with their lives.

There was no clue as to the origin of the fire, and the greatest mystery hung about the affair.

Many said that he had fired the house himself, and numerous ugly rumors got about.

He went to live in a hotel until he could secure another house, and furnish it to his taste.

He sat alone in the cozy parlor attached to his apartments one night, just at the close of this eventful week, when one of the hotel servants entered and said:

"A lady to see you, sir."

"Show her in," he muttered, thinking that his sister desired to see him.

The man bowed and retired, and in a few moments a lady, closely veiled and dressed all in black, entered the room.

"Well, what now?" growled Rutherford. "What bad news do you bring now? You never come unless you have some evil message."

The lady suddenly threw off her veil, and Rutherford, to his intense astonishment, beheld his injured wife.

"You!" he gasped.

He knew that she had escaped from the asylum, but so many things had happened since learning it, he had forgotten it for the time.

"Yes, I!" she said, coldly, "your wronged and persecuted wife."

"What do you want?" he asked, uneasily.

"Justice!" she hissed, advancing toward him with a swift step.

There was a gleam in her eyes that he did not like, and coward that he was, he sprang to his feet in alarm.

"What do you want?" asked Rutherford, trembling with fear.

"I want justice—justice and vengeance!" hissed the poor woman. "Already have I struck blow after blow, but the end is not yet."

"Who fired the house where you lay in slumber? It was I! Who stole your child, my child, whom you loved? It was I again! Who has brought disaster upon disaster down on your head? I!"

Then she laughed wildly and advanced upon him fiercely.

"They say I am mad!" she cried. "You, and then that fiend Jones, and then Harden shall fall and nothing can be done to me."

She suddenly drew a gleaming knife from her dress and laughed a shrill laugh.

"She will murder me!" cried Rutherford, in an agony of fear, as he rushed toward the bell-rope to summon aid.

With a quick movement she intercepted him and severed the cord with one blow, leaving the end dangling far out of reach.

"Ha, ha, ha! You shall not escape me!" she hissed.

"Help!" screamed the wretch, overcome with fright.

The woman sprang upon him, seized him by the throat, and poised the knife for a blow.

At that moment the door was thrown open and Alf dashed into the room.

"Mother!" he cried, passionately, as he ran forward.

The woman turned, released her victim, who fell trembling upon the floor, and then turned toward Alf.

"Alf, my boy, back from the grave!" she shrieked, throwing herself into her son's arms.

Then she wept hysterically, and ran on in the wildest fashion of love, hate, revenge, justice, and a hundred other matters.

Alf folded her to his breast, turned toward the cowering villain on the floor, and said, bitterly:

"So this is more of your work! My mother insane, my sister well-nigh driven to despair! What more would you have done had I not returned? Beware, wretch that you are, for now the tide has turned, and it will sweep you to destruction!"

Then, with his mother's head on his shoulder, the young avenger hurriedly left the room.

CHAPTER XXI.

CLOSING IN.

One morning in the early part of the new year New York was startled by the announcement that Rutherford's bank had suspended, and that the owner had decamped.

At the same time there appeared an item to the effect that the will under which Rutherford had inherited the bulk of his property was a forgery.

It was the disclosure of this fact that had caused Rutherford's flight—so the papers stated—as an arrest would have soon followed.

He had gathered all the available cash, and was now a fugitive, leaving hundreds of poor people victims to his greed.

The same day, however, an announcement was made that all claims against the bank would be paid if presented within one month.

It was Alf Thorpe who thus came to the rescue of the unfortunates whom Rutherford had cheated out of their savings.

The affairs of the bank were settled within a week and during that time no word had been heard of the fugitive.

It was a cold, raw night in January and Dr. Philo Harden sat in his cozy study warming his shins by a cheerful fire and occasionally sipping a mug of hot punch and taking a mouthful of warm soup which was kept hot by a spirit lamp.

"It's an ugly night out," he muttered, as he lighted a cigar and puffed away contentedly, "an ugly night, indeed."

At that moment the door was thrown open, and in rushed Miss Jones, the hard-featured superintendent of the female ward.

"Number eighty-seven has escaped!" she gasped, "and has already liberated some of the most dangerous patients."

"Why didn't the men shoot him down?" cried Harden, springing to his feet. "The law would protect them."

"They were taken by surprise, and their arms captured from them."

"I'll see to this," growled Harden, hurrying to a closet and taking therefrom a brace of loaded revolvers.

Then he hastened out, but, as he reached the head of the corridor, two men suddenly leaped out upon him.

Crack, crack!

Philo Harden was, ordinarily, a good shot, but on this occasion his skill failed him.

He wounded one of his assailants in the arm, but the other escaped unhurt.

In less than a second he had thrown himself upon the doctor and pinioned him in his powerful grasp.

"Ha, ha, ha! I have captured the fiend!" he shrieked. "Now I will give him a taste of his own medicine."

With that he dragged the miserable wretch down the corridor in spite of his struggles.

At the head of a flight of stairs Harden yelled for assistance and tried to get away, but the maniac tightened his grip upon him and both rolled to the bottom.

A strong smell of fire and smoke was now noticed, the air being hot and stifling.

"Great heavens! the place is on fire!" cried Harden, trembling with fear.

He had lost one of his weapons, and he now endeavored to use the second, which he still carried, though his arm was pinioned to his side.

He pressed the trigger and fired, shooting his assailant in the leg.

The maniac released his victim for an instant, only to spring upon him, seize the weapon and hurl it from him to a great distance.

Then seizing Harden by the collar, he dragged him to the end of the corridor and forced him into a cell, the door of which he closed with a bang.

At that moment a door leading into the corridor was sud-

denly burst open, and a mass of flame and smoke appeared. Shrieks were heard in various parts of the building, and frightened men and women came hurrying from different directions.

"Ha, ha, ha! Let us shut the demon up in his own furnace!" shrieked the maniac, throwing himself against the door of the cell and keeping it closed.

Harden screamed and yelled, threw himself against the door in a vain attempt to force it open, begged to be released, and acted like a wild man in his terror.

The maniac only laughed, and all the time the flames were increasing and threatening to destroy the entire building.

At last the smoke grew so dense and stifling that breathing was next to impossible, and Harden ceased to rave.

The next morning it was reported that an escaped lunatic had set fire to the Shadyside retreat, and that Dr. Harden, together with one or two attendants and some of the patients, had lost their lives in the flames.

On the same day Captain Silas Boomer, master of the ship Hong Kong, was seated in the cabin of his vessel, which was to sail in a few days, reading the papers.

"So the lunatic asylum has gone up in a blaze, has it?" he muttered. "Well, that's the last of my old mate, Jack Moore. That chucking the boy overboard allus preyed on his mind, but I didn't know he was put in the lunatic asylum till I come back on this trip. Reckon he was the feller what set the place on fire."

"Later developments that afternoon showed that Moore's body had been found lying against a cell door, and that inside the cell was the body of Philo Harden, both scarcely recognizable.

That night a fire broke out in some warehouses near the dock alongside which the Hong Kong lay moored.

Before she could be towed to a place of safety the ship was wrapped in flames, and was burned to the water's edge before morning.

The skipper could not be found, and at last it was discovered that he had gone on board late the night before in a state of intoxication.

It was concluded that he had fallen asleep in his bunk and, being unable to arouse himself, had been burned to death.

"Slowly and surely the hand of justice is crushing one after another of the wretches who conspired against me and mine," murmured Alf, when the news came out.

Poor Mrs. Rutherford, rescued and taken home by Alf, was still in a semi-insane state, and the greatest care had to be exercised to see that she did not injure herself in some of her paroxysms, which, though not as frequent as formerly, were still dangerous.

Daisy had gone home with Alf to the elegant residence he had hired in the city and was now living happy and contented with the brother whom she had so long regarded as dead.

Gollo, the boy from the strange island in the Pacific, had begun to entertain a deep regard for the girl, and it seemed not unlikely that some day there would be a grand wedding at which Alf would figure as best man and Gollo as bridegroom.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WORK OF RETRIBUTION GOES ON.

The winter had passed, the spring had nearly given way to summer, and many things had happened.

Mrs. Rutherford, Alf's mother, was now under the care of a noted physician, rapidly returning to sanity.

The engagement between Mr. Gollo, as he was called, and Alf's sister Daisy, had been announced, the marriage to take place in the fall.

Suds was head butler at Alf's, and filled the position admirably, thinking the world of his young master, and looking jealously after his interests.

The claims against the Rutherford bank had been all settled, and the concern wound up, Alf starting a new concern out of the wreck, and promised to succeed well at it.

The Alfred Thorpe Banking Company, with a capital of a million, was considered one of the safest institutions in the city, its chief, though young, having the confidence of all the noted men in the city.

It was evening and Alf had been for a drive through the Park, accompanied by Gollo and Daisy.

As they drove out of the Park a poor woman came forward, almost under the horses' feet, and solicited alms.

Twilight had already fallen, but it was not yet dark enough for Alf not to see the face of the beggar.

"Mrs. Adderly," he cried, "have you come to this?"

The woman uttered a startled cry, turned her face away, and began to mumble something.

"What has brought you to this?" continued Alf. "Did not your brother see that you wanted nothing after all that you did for him?"

"He is a wretch!" screamed the woman. "He has fled and left me to starve. Give me something, if only a trifle, to keep me from dying."

"You would have driven me to the river," cried Daisy, "but I cannot see you suffer. Here, take this!" and the young lady offered the miserable woman a piece of gold.

The poor wretch snatched it eagerly, and then dashed away into the darkness without uttering a word of thanks.

The next day Alf, in glancing over the papers, came upon the following piece of news:

"Among the old offenders arraigned at the Tombs police court this morning was Mary Adderly, a chronic drunkard, who was arrested last night when trying to obtain money by telling a sad story of destitution, an old game with Mary. She will receive calls at her summer residence on the Island for the next six months."

Our hero went straight to the Commissioner of Charities and Corrections to see if something could not be done to rescue the poor woman and restore her to respectability.

He was too late.

Mrs. Adderly had died of delirium tremens a few hours after being taken to the Island, and preparations were already making to bury her in Potter's field when Alf's messenger arrived.

The unfortunate woman was given decent burial, but never a tear was shed over her grave, and there were many who considered that she would have had no more than her deserts if she had been allowed to rest in a nameless grave, uncared for and forgotten.

The next one who had conspired with Rutherford was Miss Jones, the assistant at the insane asylum.

She had escaped at the time of the fire, but later on was arrested by Messrs. Wheeler & Lockett, the lawyers, on evidence furnished by Mrs. Rutherford and others, and sent to the penitentiary.

Some of the women help in the asylum testified against her, and she was sent to prison for a long term, during which it was to be hoped she would see the evil of her ways and reform.

Rutherford's child, now a boy of five, whom his mother had stolen from the house, was now at Alf's in the care of a competent nurse, and everybody seemed greatly attached to him.

He greatly resembled Alf as he was when a child, and both our hero and Daisy entertained a great love for him in spite of the fact that his father was such a scoundrel.

"He has the same mother that we have," said Alf, "and let us hope that he will inherit none of his father's bad qualities, and soon learn to forget him."

Rutherford still remained a fugitive, and no news could be learned concerning him as the weeks and months rolled by.

All his confederates had perished or received the reward due their crimes, and he was a wanderer, forced to remain in hiding, and not daring to return to his native land.

"Justice will overtake him yet," said Alf one day, "and all the suffering that he caused me shall be meted out to him ten-fold."

CHAPTER XXIII.

AT LAST.

Ten years passed swiftly on and brought many changes. Alf, now a man of thirty-five, full-bearded and noble of stature, was the president of one of the richest banks in the city, and a man whom any one might honor.

He was still worth a million, for he gave freely to charitable objects and never allowed his fortune to run over that figure.

Gollo and Daisy were married and had three children, two boys and a girl, named for their parents and for Alf, respectively.

Alf's mother had long been restored to reason, and was now a white-haired lady of benevolent aspect and disposition whom everybody loved.

Her son Charlie, a manly boy of fifteen, had taken the name of Thorpe, and had no recollection of his father, of whom none of the family ever spoke.

Alf had never married, but remained a bachelor, having his mother, sister, and brother-in-law with him, all in a fine, big house which he had built and which was large enough for all.

Suds, now a gray-haired darky of middle age, was the factotum of the place and was as devoted to Alf as ever, though he gave considerable of his affection to young Charlie, Alf's half-brother.

The latter was being given a first-class education by Alf, and was destined one day to take a position in the bank with the prospect of ultimately being at the head of that institution.

One Saturday morning in the fall of the year, Charlie was sent to the clearing-house with a bag of gold of considerable weight, which he carried in his hand.

As the boy was crossing a narrow street two men suddenly ran against and nearly threw him down.

One of the men seized the bag and tried to wrench it from his grasp.

"Stop, thief!" he cried, retaining his hold upon the bag.

The man uttered an imprecation and struck at the youth with his clenched fist.

The poor boy received the blow full in the face and fell to the ground, striking his head on the stones.

He dropped the bag and fainted, but just before he did so he caught sight of the man's face as he stooped down and seized the bag of gold.

Then all became dark, and when he recovered he was in a broker's office lying upon a lounge.

"Did the man escape?" he asked, first of all.

"Yes," was the answer.

"They will never trust me at the bank again," sighed Charlie. "I was too careless."

"No, no, you were not to blame," said the other, reassuringly. "The man was particularly clever. Can you describe him?"

Charlie thought a few moments, and then said:

"Yes; he was a man of large build, full brown beard mixed with gray, and coarse, heavy features. I noticed his eyes especially, for in the instant that I saw them, they had such a wicked expression, that I will never forget them."

He did not return to the bank immediately, on account of the pain in his head, and when he did go he went in a carriage which had been sent by Alf.

He had heard of the robbery, and when he met Charlie he told the boy not to worry over it, that nobody blamed him for what had happened, and that, on the contrary, he had behaved nobly.

"You saw the man close enough to remember him, did you, little fellow?" asked Alf.

"Oh, yes," and Charlie described the thief's appearance minutely.

Alf's brow darkened and he seemed absorbed in thought, saying nothing for some minutes.

"Well, Charlie boy," he said at length, "keep your eyes open, and if you see the man again and are sure of him, have him arrested."

Charlie was in the bank every spare moment of his time after that, and always on the lookout for suspicious characters.

One day, about a month after the robbery, shortly before three o'clock, when the bank was crowded, he came in just in time to see a man pick the pocket of another man awaiting his turn on the line in front of the receiving teller's window.

In a moment his face became hot and flushed, his heart beating fiercely against his side.

He had recognized in the pickpocket the man who had robbed him on the street.

"This man is a thief!" he cried, hurrying up. "Call the police; he is a thief," and he seized the fellow by the sleeve.

"Let go of me, you young fool!" hissed the man, trying to get away.

"I will not. You are a thief; you have just robbed this gentleman in front of you, and you robbed me a month ago in the street. I say you are a thief!"

The boy spoke in loud, excited tones, and in an instant both he and the man were surrounded by an eager crowd.

"What is the matter, Charlie?" asked Alf himself, coming forward, having heard the noise.

"This is the man who robbed me a month ago, and he has just been trying to rob this gentleman."

Alf's eyes met those of the thief, and he turned pale.

"You here!" he said. "At last, at last!"

"Yes, I am here," growled the man, who had now ceased to resist. "What fatality brought me to this place, of all places?"

"You may well call it fatality, Mr. Rutherford," said Alf. "The hand of justice has closed upon you at last."

"And it is to you I owe this?" scowled the man, now closely held by two officers, glaring at Charlie, and holding up his manacled hands. "Do you know who I am, and who you are? Shall I tell you? You are——"

"He is Charlie Thorpe, my brother," said Alf, quickly, "and the instrument by which you have at last been brought to justice."

"He is more; he is my——"

"Nemesis!" hissed Alf in Rutherford's ear. "Dare to reveal yourself at your peril. Through your own child you have been brought to earth, as a punishment for the sorrows you brought upon me and mine. I said I would crush you, and if you dare breathe that word that was upon your lips, I will not stop till you reach the gallows!"

Rutherford, thoroughly cowed, allowed himself to be led away.

There were sufficient proofs of his guilt, without having to take Charlie's evidence, and he was sent to State prison for ten years.

Thus his own son had been made the instrument by which he was brought to justice for his many crimes.

He attempted to escape a year or so after his incarceration, and was shot dead by one of the guards.

Charlie never knew the relationship the man bore to him, for Alf guarded the secret well, and to-day he is at the head of the bank, from which Alf has long since retired, and like his brother, promises soon to be worth a million.

Next week's issue will contain "THE DRUNKARD'S WARNING; OR, THE FRUITS OF THE WINE CUP," by Jno. B. Dowd.

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

CURRENT NEWS

Thousands of lottery tickets were confiscated recently in a raid by the Paterson, N. J., police, who arrested Gabriel Bove, alleged agent of a lottery company, in his home, 845 Union avenue. Bove was held by Justice of the Peace Charles Evans for the Federal authorities. Bove has served a prison term and has been fined for similar offences in Paterson. He is suspected of being head of a lottery band in New Jersey.

Of interest is a method of treating timber electrically which is being developed in England. When current is passed through freshly cut timber a chemical change is said to occur, which renders it more able to withstand attacks of fungi. A few hours' treatment by one of the methods is claimed to have an effect equal to months of ordinary drying in free air. Inasmuch as moisture assists the flow of current, the process is best applied when the tree has just been felled. From 3 kw. to 6 kw. of current is required per cubic meter.

Despite objections of his attorneys, Giovani Margaroli has had his hair cut at the County Jail, Nevada City. Margaroli has been in jail, charged with murder, since December 18, and during that time his hair had become long and unkempt. He intends to plead insanity, and his attorneys wished him to look the part. His attorneys talked of getting out an injunction, but examination of the law develops the sheriff had a right to cut the prisoner's hair. Accordingly, Fred Demerteau, also in jail on a murder charge, gave Margaroli a hair cut. Margaroli did not object.

Harry Houdini, the "handcuff king," showed 1,500 convicts at Sing Sing the other day just how easy it is to get out of shackles, chains and straitjackets. He gave a performance in the big assembly hall of the prison under the auspices of the Mutual Welfare League. Two women, guests of Warden Osborne, and some of the prison officials were also present. Houdini made a speech after the performance, telling how he had done his tricks in every prison in the United States. He also urged the men to be loyal to the Mutual Welfare League and to Warden Osborne.

Judge Newton, the other day, imposed a heavy fine and a sentence of six months on half a dozen boys arrested by Sheriff Krietenstetin for swimming in the river without bathing suits, at Terre Haute, Ind. The charge against them was public indecency. After much weeping by the boys, and a most impassioned appeal for leniency by the father of one of them, the court released the boys on their promise to refrain from swimming without bathing suits.

The sheriff has had a fast motor boat built and has undertaken the duty of patrolling the river front to prevent the boys swimming without suits.

Beetles bearing Masonic and other markings that have proved a puzzle to the Carnegie Institute have been found by Fred Steen of the Steen mine, in the Cornucopia district in Oregon. The insects are of the oriental type of the long-horned wood-borer, but according to the Carnegie Institute there is an apparent variation from any hitherto known species. The backs are black and the markings are traced as though in white ink. Some markings form a combination of letters and Arabic numerals. Many have marking "V.U 6." Others have the Masonic emblem of the square and compass plainly discernible.

Carl Weiss, aged fourteen, son of Otto Weiss, a contractor of Evansville, Ind., has proved that raising guinea pigs for experimental clinics is profitable. Weiss has a guinea pig farm in the rear yard of his home. Weiss operates his farm on a systematic basis. Everything is kept as clean and sanitary as possible, and the pigs are housed in boxes with plenty of ventilation. Feeding time is regular, and the same quantity of food is provided each day. In addition to being the caretaker and breeder of the animals, Weiss acts as cratier, shipper and carpenter, and when he gets an order for pigs he makes his own boxes for shipping. Before he began to raise guinea pigs, he was a chicken fancier and had many prize game fowls.

A careful reading of the many accounts, official and private, which have been published, describing the battle of Jutland, leaves a strong impression of the wonderful defensive qualities of the modern battleship. Because of the misty weather, battleships come under fire at ranges as short as 8,000 and even 5,000 yards, when salvo after salvo was landed upon the opposing ships. There is a saying among our naval men (or rather there was before this great fight) that the first salvo to land upon the enemy would practically decide the fight—so demoralizing would be the burst of a few high explosive shells within the ship. Nevertheless, Admiral Jellicoe speaks of her as having "turned away," probably to save salvos upon a battleship of the enemy, which apparently survived the ordeal, since the report speaks of her having "turned away," probably to get out of range; and there is the case of the "Warspite," which, with broken steering gear, became the target for six battleships of the enemy and nevertheless effected repairs and rejoined the British fleet. Then again, the "Marlborough," although struck by a torpedo, continued in the fight and landed her salvos with effect.

MAKING IT PAY

—OR—

The Boy Who Bought a Newspaper

BY WILLIAM WADE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER VIII.

A BRAVE RESCUE AND A DISCOVERY.

From his position in the bow Dick directed Jack's movements, and the boat rapidly approached the scene of danger.

"Serve him right if he did go over," muttered Jack, "but it's too bad to scare the girls and put them in danger, too."

When they drew nearer the boys saw Percy standing up in the boat, waving his arms frantically and shouting for help.

He had lost his oar somehow, and was beside himself with fear.

"Sit down, you fool!" shouted Dick, impatiently. "You'll upset the boat!"

At that moment Percy fell headlong into the river, causing the boat to rock dangerously, whereat the girls all screamed and got up.

"Sit down, all of you!" cried Dick. "A trifle to your right, Jack."

Dick kneeled in the bow of the boat and stretched out his hand.

The larger boat was being carried down-stream rapidly, but there might still be time to prevent its going over the falls.

Dick paid no attention to Percy, who he knew could swim, but kept his eye on the boat.

"Peak, Jack!" he called.

Jack raised his oars and the boat glided ahead under the impetus that had been given it.

"Sit still, young ladies," said Dick. "Keep perfectly quiet. If you don't, I can't do a thing."

The girls were terribly excited, and it was utterly impossible for them to stop talking, but they sat reasonably still, and this was something.

"Hold water, Jack!" cried Dick, as the boat neared the other.

Jack dipped in his oars just as the two boats were about to touch.

Dick reached out and seized the stern of the other boat.

"Back water, Jack!" he cried. "Stern, for all you're worth!"

Jack backed water with a sturdy stroke, and the progress of the other boat was checked, but not stopped.

"We'll have to tow 'em, Jack. Wait till I get a line fast. Sit still, young ladies. The more you twist and squirm about, the harder it is for me. Besides, it makes you look ungraceful."

That last little touch secured the desired end.

Not one of those girls wished to be thought ungraceful, and they all sat perfectly still after that.

Dick took the boat's warp and secured it to their boat's tiller, after which he took up a second pair of oars lying on the thwarts.

With both boys pulling a good, strong stroke, they were soon able to make fair progress upstream.

"If we dared to take them in here," said Dick, "we could let the other boat go adrift and do better, but they'd be sure to go overboard or upset us. The average girl is as clumsy in a boat as a cow in a ballroom."

"You'll get yourself disliked if they hear you say that," chuckled Jack, "although it's true enough. There are very few girls who can get around in a boat without upsetting it or themselves."

"Percy has landed," said Dick, turning his head. "You can be sure that none of these girls will go out rowing with him again."

When they were well beyond the influence of the current they pulled in to shore, and Dick got into the boat with Sadie, saying:

"You ought to be able to manage all right now, Jack. Maybe the young ladies would like to resume their trip?"

"Not any for me," spoke up one. "I've had all I want. You can put me on land right here, Mr. Hemstead. I can walk the rest of the way."

The others were of the same opinion, and Jack helped them all ashore, when they thanked the two boys for what they had done, and hurried away.

"Mr. Percy Edgewood will have to come after his boat," said Jack, "for I am not going to take it home for him," retorted Jack, as he rowed away with Percy's boat in tow.

He sent word to the young swell that night that he could have his boat by calling for it, and Percy sent one of his father's men after it.

The Times on Monday had the following account of the accident:

"On Saturday afternoon Mr. Percy Edgewood, son of the senior partner of Edgewood & Gillingham, proprietors of the Times, while taking a party of young ladies of the fashionable set of Norwood out rowing was suddenly seized with a fainting spell and fell overboard, narrowly escaping drowning. A young man of the town took the ladies ashore and was afterward handsomely rewarded by Mr. Edgewood."

Dick laughed when he read this, but Jack said:

"Percy Edgewood is a liar and a cad. Do you see how carefully he avoids mentioning any names but his own? 'Handsomely rewarded,' indeed! The man who came for the boat offered me a dollar, and I had all I could do to keep from kicking him out."

"Never mind, Jack," laughed Dick. "The News gives you full credit for your share in the affair, and that is the only account that will be generally read, so don't worry about it."

(To be continued.)

FROM ALL POINTS

A DELICATE OPERATION.

New York's best surgeons will endeavor to restore the sight of Melba, a seven-year-old Eskimo girl, who was found deserted in an igloo by Dr. L. H. French, United States Government physician in Alaska.

The cornea of a rabbit will be grafted upon one affected eye and a cataract removed from the other.

In charge of Mrs. Corinne Call, a Government teacher, the child arrived in Portland, Ore., recently. Mrs. Call says the Eskimos left Melba in the ice hut, hoping she would die. She has been totally blind for five years. The trouble is diagnosed as an eruption of the cornea.

CROSSES CONTINENT IN 70 DAYS.

John H. Scott reached the City Hall, Philadelphia, August 19, ending his walk from San Francisco. He is the champion long distance hiker of America.

Scott crossed the continent in seventy days, five hours and thirty minutes—almost ten days faster than any other man has made the distance. His 3,524-mile walk from San Francisco to Philadelphia beats the records of John Ennis and Edward P. Weston, the former champions.

Scott, who is 56, looked fit and hardened as he reached the City Hall. He lost only ten pounds. "Prayer and persistence did it," he said. "I used both frequently."

CATFISH LIKE CATALPA WORMS.

Fishermen at Washington, Ind., have discovered a bait that beats the fishing worm, minnow, crawfish or any other bait ever used here. Catalpa tree worms are what all the fishermen are using now, and with this bait they are catching fish by the hundreds in White River. The new bait seems to be most popular with catfish, as they are about the only fish that are being caught. At a camp of post-office employees more than 100 pounds of fish were caught in one night with catalpa tree worms. John and Will Nash caught sixty pounds in one night, all channel catfish weighing from one to five pounds. The worm is from one to three inches long and is easily found in any catalpa tree grove.

COYOTES ATTACK FAMILY.

George Dugan, who returned recently from his ranch at Hot Creek, Nev., tells of a raid by three rabid coyotes at the ranch of L. L. Wattle, twelve miles above Hot Creek.

Mrs. Belle Boston, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wattle, was visiting the ranch with her two children, when three coyotes arrived.

They bit all the animals they could reach and attacked the children, who were playing some distance from the house.

Mrs. Boston took the little ones in the house, the coyotes followed, and attempted to get in through the screen door. Mrs. Boston grabbed a pump gun and fired several shots through the window, killing one of the animals, when the remaining two decamped. The coyote that was shot, it was found, had his jaws covered with foam and blood.

GRAZED IN NEVADA 3,000,000 YEARS AGO.

A well-preserved set of teeth and jawbone of an animal which Prof. J. C. Jones of the Nevada State University declares were the property of a three-toed horse of the Upper Miocene age have been unearthed in the Washoe Valley, on the Pedroli ranch, by university engineers.

Prof. Jones says the horse probably roamed the wilds of Nevada some 3,000,000 years ago.

He says the horses of that date were even smaller than the Shetlands of the present day, and are classified as the eohippus. The specimens were found in a well which apparently penetrated a prehistoric lake bed. Teeth of mammoths, fossil leaves and other specimens of prehistoric ages have been found in wells on the Pedroli ranch. They are among the best in the fossil collection at the university, as they show clearly the age and classification to which they belong.

CHASERS FOR SUBMARINE.

The Greenport, L. I., Basin and Construction Company, known among naval authorities of the world since the construction of its design of submarine chasers for the Russian Government and an altogether different design for the United States Government, has just contracted with a foreign government for the construction of fourteen of the chasers similar to the Russian craft and two super-chasers.

While the company's officers will not verify the report, it is learned from good authority that these craft will be built for the English navy for the sole purpose of nullifying the usefulness of the merchant submarine campaign started by Germany to break the blockade of England.

The new boats are to be 60 feet long, 10 feet beam and 22 feet 10 inches draft. Considerable power being necessary in order to outmaneuver a submarine, the craft will be equipped with three eight-cylinder Van Blerck motors developing 525 horsepower each. The boats will be able to speed 31 miles an hour. The super-chasers are of the same lines, but are larger and will turn up 800 horsepower and 40 miles an hour.

TIMELY TOPICS

A lake in a city park at Kansas City, Mo., was drained of more than 500,000 gallons of water the other day to recover a wedding ring lost there by Mrs. Hugh Foster. Several days ago, while skipping stones across the surface of the water, she lost her ring off her finger.

Mrs. J. Piepot, of Milton, Ore., met with a peculiar accident when visiting at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Clay, residing a mile above there. She was untying the rope to change the pasture for a calf, when the animal ran around her, twisting the rope around her leg in such a manner that a fracture in two places resulted.

George Neill, a farmer of Jeffersonville, Ind., took his gun and went out to shoot crows which were raiding his cornfield. As he was about to raise his gun to fire at a crow, the weapon was discharged, sending the charge into his foot and shooting off one of his toes, besides badly injuring his foot. The farmer then harnessed his team and drove several miles to have a surgeon dress the wound.

A pipe, partly extinguished, which he left in a pocket of his coat, started a fire which almost suffocated Neal Johnson, when he was asleep. Johnson awoke at midnight one night and found his room full of smoke. Unable to get downstairs because of the smoke, and almost overcome, he jumped from a second-story window. He suffered a broken rib in the fall. Furniture in two rooms was damaged.

Martin Lund, a sea-diver of renown, has left San Francisco on the steamer Del Norte for Crescent City to salvage the wreck of the old side-wheeler Brother Jonathan, which was lost off the coast of Del Norte County half a century ago with more than \$2,000,000 in specie, Government bills and other valuables. J. C. Freese, marine contractor of San Francisco, is associated with Lund in financing and equipping the expedition.

An English naval architect in a recent study of the question of applying oil engines for the propulsion of warships states that in the case of a battleship he found that with an equal number of shafts, equal power and speed can be obtained with double-acting two-cycle engines as with steam, auxiliaries being included in each case and the machinery weights being equal. He found that the radius of action could be increased at full speed at least three times and at cruising speeds at least four times.

Two big buckets of olive oil constitute the toilet lotion, used in giving Nellie, the elephant in the

Cincinnati Zoological Garden, her spring massage. This unusual treatment, according to Popular Mechanics, is considered necessary to keep the captive animal's skin in healthy condition. After being kept in steam-heated winter quarters, her hide becomes hard, and not infrequently cracks, causing a great deal of discomfort. The big animal thoroughly enjoys having her keepers scrub her body with oil; they apply it with big brushes attached to long sticks. A thorough application of the rather expensive fluid leaves the hide soft and pliable.

Many millions of marbles are made annually in the United States. It is estimated that the boys of this country use no less than 200,000,000 each year. But there are other users of marbles besides youthful players. The Standard Oil Company is one of the largest buyers of marbles, according to Popular Mechanics; some of its purchases are used in oil cans, and others of larger sizes are rolled through graded pipe lines to clean out the paraffin that gathers on the inside of the pipes. The manufacturers of ink, chemicals and powder use marbles. Other buyers of these little spheres are dealers in railway supplies, puzzle-box makers, and salt producers.

Miss Lulu M. Dew, of Madisonville, Ohio, will be hard to beat. Miss Dew has made application at the marine corps recruiting station for enlistment in that renowned corps. She is about twenty years old, is of splendid physique, and has spent most of her life in Mexico, around Chihuahua. During the Madero revolution in Mexico she was of great assistance to the rebels as a guide, and is confident she could be of the same assistance to the American soldiers. It was during her work as a guide to the rebels that she became acquainted with Villa, and was present at a banquet given in his honor by her sister, who at present lives in Chihuahua, Mexico.

When a pet Angora cat belonging to Mrs. William F. Koehler, of 140 Lorraine avenue, Montclair, N. J., disappeared last February, her mistress was greatly distressed. The cat had vanished so completely that it seemed certain that every one of her nine lives had been snuffed out. Mrs. Koehler was lamenting the loss of the Angora the other day, when one of her housemaids told her that Amelia Vail, of Oakland avenue, Bloomfield, formerly employed as a maid in the house, had thrown the cat into the furnace fire. Mrs. Koehler notified the S. P. C. A., and Agent Eyeseldt of the society caused the arrest of Miss Vail on a charge of cruelty to animals. The girl was arraigned and will be given a further hearing.

SIMPLE SAM THE POOR BOY

—OR—

Not So Green As He Looked

BY J. P. RICHARDS

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER VI (Continued).

She thrust the roll of bills into the pocket of her dress and Sam sat down on the steps of the little porch and began patting his dog's head and talking to him.

"Tige, old boy," said he, "we are rich. Marm's got five hundred dollars, all because I stopped a pair of runaway horses, and you were not along with me to see the fun. Now, we'll have some soup bones again pretty soon. Marm can't do without me, and I can't do without you; so I guess we will be good together, and by the way, Tige, half the people in this town don't know that they are animals just the same as you are. There used to be a good many wise men in the world, but they seem to be getting very scarce. It's just a little bit of hard luck that we can't go out together, for when I go you take care of the place, and when you go out I take care of it till you come back. Nobody calls you Simple, Tige, because a dog is not supposed to know much, but it is my belief that you know a blamed sight more than some people. Nobody can tell what a dog is thinking about, because he can't talk. But you say things to me that I understand, and I say things to you that you understand as well as I do. I wish I knew more about dog language than I do. Then we would have a lot of fun telling stories to each other, wouldn't we? Somehow or other I never did believe that a dog has a fair chance. Now, if you had claws like a bat you could climb a tree and catch the squirrels and rob birds' nests. As it is, you can simply tell me what tree the game is in, and I then have to use the gun to bring it down."

The dog was looking him in the face all the time he was talking, and he gave a little bark when he finished.

"Yes, that's so," replied Sam.

CHAPTER VII.

SAM AND THE GIRL HE RESCUED.

Young Lena Heywood, who was with her mother in the carriage when the horses ran away, had failed to call on Sam to thank him for the rescue.

She was a very pretty girl, about seventeen years of age, and was of a very timid disposition.

Several times she mentioned to her mother that she ought to go to him and thank him.

"My dear child," said Mrs. Heywood, "your father and I have done all that is necessary."

"Yes, I know, mother; but it does seem like ingratitude for me not to do so myself. A number of the girls have asked me if I have thanked him, and I've had to tell them 'no, not yet, but that you and father had,' and they actually taunted me for lack of gratitude."

"Oh, well, don't you mind that. Sam doesn't think about it, and I'm sure that his mother is satisfied with what your father and I have done."

Now, Lena had known Sam all her life, for they had grown up together in the little town, had attended the same school, and she knew well enough that he was considered "off" mentally.

Of course, being well acquainted, they had always called each other Sam and Lena.

For more than a week after the runaway she was confined to her room from the effects of the fright, but now she was going out with her friends every day when the weather was fair, and every time she did so she really hoped that she would meet Sam face to face. One day she was out with two of her friends when they met him on the street.

It was right in front of Merchant Davis' store. She was about to enter just as he was coming out.

"Oh, Sam!" she exclaimed, "I'm so glad to see you!" and she extended her hand to him, which he shook warmly and held quite a while.

Her two companions shook hands with him also.

"Sam," said she, "I've been hoping to meet you for some time. I want to tell you how grateful I feel to you for stopping those horses."

"That's all right, Lena," said he. "I guess I know how you feel. I've known you all your life, and I knew that you were a good girl, and that you felt grateful, but I never thought anything about that. Your father and mother have both been to see us, and they were very kind."

"Well, I was then in the hands of our doctor, and couldn't go with them. Now, Sam, please remember me kindly, for I tell you I'll never forget your brave act as long as I live."

"Thank you! I'll always remember you, Lena. In fact, I've always felt kindly toward you. You were always careful of my feelings, whilst the others would say things that wounded me deeply. I wish you would come down to the house and see mother sometimes. She thinks a great deal of you."

"Thank you, Sam; I'll try to do so. But I'm afraid of that big dog of yours."

"Why, Lena, he wouldn't bite you under any circumstances. Besides, he always obeys mother and me."

"Yes; but your mother or you might not see me come in."

"Well, I'll tell him that you are coming down, and that he must be good."

She laughed and asked if the dog could remember.

"Yes, he can. That dog is not simple like I am."

(To be continued.)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

MONUMENT TO ERICSEN.

The Senate passed the bill introduced by Senator O'Gorman, of New York, appropriating \$30,000 for the erection of a monument in the city of Washington to the memory of John Ericsson, the inventor of the Monitor. The measure has already passed the House and now goes to the President for his signature.

\$60 IN OLD HANDBAG.

They were sorting old clothes at the Salvation Army Industrial Home, Portland, Ore., the other day, with never a thought of hidden riches in the frayed and spotted garments that had been given to charity. Yet the task was enlivened when a handbag dropped from a bundle of clothes before the workers. They opened it to discover six \$10 bills. The woman who contributed the bundle was at once sought and found. To Capt. Andrews, who returned the money, she expressed her gratitude by presenting one of the bills to the Salvation Army.

LOADS OF INDIAN RELICS.

Loaded down with newly found Indian relics, including pipes, stone war hammers, dishes, grinders, seventy-five arrowheads, ten spear heads, several knives, eleven mortars and more than a hundred pestles, J. C. Rutenic, A. C. Yaden, Floyd Brandenburg and George Snyder, of Klamath Falls, Cal., members of the recently organized Klamath Historical Association, returned recently from a ten days' research expedition through the lava beds.

These beds, lying just across the California line in Modoc County, were the seat of the Modoc Indian war, and have furnished many valuable relics during the past few years. Most of those found on the present trip were gathered along the receding shore of Tule Lake, which is being drained at the hands of the United States reclamation service by diverting Lost River, which formerly flowed into it, and down the Klamath river.

DIGGING FOR GOLD.

One morning recently there was found a hole in the ground under a gigantic sycamore tree in the east end of the Pomona cemetery, Pomona, Cal. The incident reopens a mystery which puzzled the people of this community ten years ago and was never solved. The mystery seems deeper than ever.

One morning, about ten years ago, the cemetery caretaker discovered that somebody had dug a hole five feet long and two feet deep under a huge limb of the sycamore. When the incident was investigated it was learned that a man who had just finished serving thirty years in the penitentiary had

been seen strolling through the cemetery a few days earlier. His history was traced and it was learned that the ex-convict had served time for killing an old miner, from whom, it is alleged, he had stolen \$50,000 in gold.

The incident caused great excitement. During the next few weeks the cemetery was honeycombed with holes which were dug by treasure seekers.

5,000,000 PRISONERS.

More than 5,000,000 prisoners, double the number of men engaged in any previous war that the world has known, now are confined in prison camps of the belligerent nations, according to Dr. John R. Mott, General Secretary of the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association, who arrived here yesterday on the Danish steamship Oscar II., from Copenhagen. Dr. Mott left here in May for Russia and has visited the prison camps of nearly all of the belligerents.

Dr. Mott said that of the prisoners, Germany has the greatest number, approximately 1,750,000. Russia, with about 1,500,000, comes next, then Austria, with 1,000,000, followed in order by France, Italy, Great Britain and Turkey. Russia's prisoners, he added, are rapidly increasing, more than 400,000 having been added to the camps since the beginning of the last Russian drive. In six weeks, Dr. Mott added, 230,000 passed through Kiev.

A LONG FAST.

Major Lawrie was an officer who fought bravely in the Soudan war. One day, before the battle of Atbara, he found a spider in the ventilator of his helmet, and watched it with some interest. The spider used to come out in the evening, and, having had its supper of flies, would return to the helmet for sleep and rest. Major Lawrie allowed the spider to remain in its strange hiding-place, and even went into battle carrying his friend in his helmet. Major Lawrie escaped without a scratch; and the same good fortune attended him at Omdurman, where the spider again accompanied him. When the war was over, Major Lawrie packed up his things to be sent home, and among them the helmet; and not till it was too late did he remember that the spider had been sent with the helmet. It must die on the road; for how could it find anything to eat in a tin-packing case? The major was sorry. He had taken a great interest in the spider, and it was sad to have condemned it to a lingering death. The first thing he did on arriving in London was to open the helmet box, expecting, of course, to find the spider dead; but not only was the spider alive and well, but it was the happy mother of two young spiders.

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

WOMAN MOTORS 3,000 MILES.

Miss Amanda Preuss, of San Francisco, Cal., arrived in New York August 19, having made the trip across the continent by way of the Lincoln Highway in an automobile in eleven days. This is believed to constitute a record for the trip with a woman driving. She carried a letter of greeting from Mayor Rolf of San Francisco to Mayor Mitchel.

Miss Preuss started on her trip on August 8, reached Salt Lake City on August 11; Council Bluffs, Iowa, on August 14; Canton, Ohio, on August 17, and Trenton on Friday night.

The tour was made under the auspices of the Y. W. C. A. of San Francisco in order to demonstrate the fact that the trip could safely be made by a woman. Miss Preuss spent several nights in the open and made her own repairs.

SHARKS USED AS FOOD.

An unreasonable prejudice exists in this country against the use of sharklike fishes (sharks, dogfish, rays, etc.) as food. A recent memoir by Mr. Lewis Radcliffe, published by the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries, points out the flesh of various small species of this class is palatable, when properly prepared, and that this fact is better appreciated abroad than in this country.

In England and Wales, in 1913, there were landed 64,996 hundredweight of dogfish, valued at \$100,000. It appears, however, that a good deal of shark meat is eaten in the eastern United States by people who think they are eating something else. For example, trap fishermen in the neighborhood of Woods Hole, Mass., remove the head, fins and tail from all the larger species of shark (except the sand shark) caught in their traps, after which treatment the body looks not unlike swordfish.

It is then shipped to Boston and New York, where it is sold as deep-water swordfish.

Shark fins are a great dainty, not only in Japan and China, but also in the West Indies and Bermuda, where they appear on the menus of the best hotels.

HUNTS RATTLESNAKES.

William R. Hoover, forest ranger in Greens Valley, Pa., has developed a good business in rattle-snake oils and skins. He captures the reptiles alive and has become quite adept at the occupation.

Within the last week or two he has added two large snakes to his collection and places no more importance to the performance than if he had been rabbit hunting. One of the snakes has ten rattles

and the other has eight. The older reptile is about 3 feet and 3 inches in length, and has an abnormally thick body.

Hoover makes his captures by placing a forked stick over the head of the snake and pinning it to the ground. He then forces a wire loop over the head of the reptile, and has it tight. Hoover says that it is a mistaken idea that rattlesnakes will always sound a warning rattle when approached. His late experience with the rattler tribe has proved the old theory to be untrue, as he has found several snakes which gave no sound when he drew near them.

Hoover feeds the snakes herbs and other natural food which he takes from the woods, and occasionally gives them a treat in the form of ground moles or mice. He fattens them before killing. Rattlesnake hunting is quite profitable, as both hide and oil command a good price.

MOVING A BIG TREE FORTY-NINE MILES.

In the difficult operation of transplanting an oak tree 40 feet high, a five-ton truck was used to advantage, handling the load of 10,740 pounds with ease. The fine oak was transported a distance of forty-nine miles over exceedingly rough roads and successfully re-planted, a feat which would hardly have been possible without the motor truck.

The operation of raising the tree was very delicate, as it was necessary to use extreme care in excavating around the roots. A heavy oak platform, circular in shape and about 6 feet in diameter, was slipped under the mass of earth clinging to the roots, and heavy sacking and ropes held the tendrils and soil together. The trunk was carefully wrapped to a height of 10 feet and then the operation of working the tree to the truck body began. A crew of thirty men, with rollers, block and tackle and derrick, brought the oak from its resting-place to the bed of the car, and the tree rolled along in an upright position until it was centered upon the truck. Then it was carefully lowered so that the trunk of the tree projected over the rear of the car. The tree and earth weighed 8,470 pounds, while the rigging, etc., weighed 2,000 pounds more; but the sturdy motor truck pulled the load over steep grades and rough roads to its destination, where the equally delicate process of unloading and resetting was accomplished.

While this was a striking feat, it was not the record in big tree removal, as a giant palm in Los Angeles was removed from the center of the town to one of the city parks about five miles distant. It was about 60 feet high and required a steam derrick to lift it upon a flat car. The palm was replanted with success and is now flourishing in its new home.

PLUCK AND LUCK

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Good Current News Articles

Charles Worden Field, aged twelve, of Jeffersonville, Ind., while diving in the Ohio river, opposite his home, felt something hard on the bottom of the river, and grabbed it. It proved to be a 50-cent piece, and he applied the principle of "finders keepers" and bought a pair of water wings for himself and another pair for his brother Ellison, aged ten.

On his way to Benton, Pa., Edward Fallon, of Danville, in his automobile, was stopped by a full-grown black bear, which trotted slowly along the road in front of the machine, stopping every few feet. After keeping in the road 100 yards, the animal went over a bank into the woods. Within a week four bears, three of them of good size, have been seen in that vicinity.

A needle which was swallowed several months ago by the infant son of A. D. Hurst, of Richmond, Cal., has just been removed from the child's arm by Dr. W. W. Fraser. The first intimation given the parents that the child had swallowed the needle was when he complained of pains in his stomach. The needle worked its way through the wall of the child's stomach and later was discovered protruding from his left arm. The baby is none the worse for the experience.

A "torpedo catcher," invented by Fred Lapan, of Milford, Conn., has been taken to the torpedo station at Newport, R. I., to be tested officially. This device, according to newspaper accounts, is an arrangement of half-inch wire cables in net form on an "L" shaped sliding steel frame, and is hung from the ship's side about twenty-five feet away. As the torpedo hits the net its head is held and the striking releases hydraulic pressure which raises the lower frame of the catcher and rear end of the torpedo above water, allowing the propeller to spin without harm. The "catcher" was built at the Lake Torpedo Works, Bridgeport, Conn.

Potash in large proportions is present in the brines and muds of the Salduro Marsh, a sink in the Salt Lake Desert about sixty miles west of the southwest edge of Great Salt Lake. From the clays underlying the salt body which covers the Marsh, the United States Geological Survey collected samples at depths of 8 to 12 feet, in which the dissolved salts were found to contain from 2 to about 3½ per cent. of potash, and 2¼ per cent. was found in the soluble salts at a depth of about 4 feet. According to analyses made by the Survey, the brines and muds from the Salduro Marsh contain considerable magnesium chloride as well as chlorides of potassium and sodium, and so are somewhat similar in composition to the deposits from which potash is manufactured in Germany.

Grins and Chuckles

Waiter—You made that fellow eat his words, eh?
Chef—Bet cher life. "How did you do it?" "Ah, I trew his letter inter de hash."

Mrs. Smith—My husband has been enjoying very poor health of late. Mrs. Brown—How fortunate that he can enjoy it! Very few people do..

"Bruddahs en sistahs," said old Parson Sparks, "ef de church bell attracted people. lak de dinnah bell, de pews would be filled in two minutes aftah de fust ringin'."

"How did he manage to do that?" asked the girl in the balcony, as the comedian struck a match on his side whiskers. "Oh, that's dead easy," answered his escort. "His whiskers are dandy. See?"

Watering carts of a certain Irish town are decorated with patent medicine advertisements. An innocent Irishman from the rural districts looked at one the other day, and remarked: "Faith, it's no wonder X is healthy, when they water the streets with Flaherty's sarsaparilla!"

Customer—That umbrella you sold me is made of such miserably poor stuff that it won't last a month.
Dealer—Yah! Ve alvays sells dot kind to intellectual men like you. You gets thinking on great subjects, and pecomes zo absent-minded you lose it in dree weeks, and den you haf ze satisfaction of knowing dat de man who vinds it vill get yet.

Tommy—Father, must I go to school? Father—Yes, Tommy. A long pause. Tommy—Must I go after breakfast? Father—Yes, Tommy. Tommy—And after dinner? Father—Yes, Tommy; you go to school like a good boy, now. Tommy—And after tea, too? Father—No, Tommy, you needn't go then. Tommy (his face brightening up)—Well, then, I'll have my tea now.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

HARD WATER.

Do you realize how hard water is when a boat sails through it at full speed? Water passing at fifty miles an hour is not the limpid fluid we are accustomed to bathe in. If you put your arm overboard from a hydroplane running fifty miles an hour and strike a wave crest, the probability is that you will break your arm or wrist, because at that speed the water has not time to give, or even to change shape, and striking it is like striking so much metal.

If a swordsman should enter one of the greater hydraulic quarries where a stream of water, under enormous head, is used to wash down hillsides, and attempt to cut into one of those streams, his sword would fly to pieces without being able to penetrate the water. The stream is like a bar of iron.

BOY SLEEPS IN TRUNK.

Edward McBride, an eight-year-old lad who lives with his parents at 427 Tenth street, Portland, Ore., crawled into a trunk, lowered the lid and went to sleep the other night.

Missed by his parents, they scoured the neighborhood for two hours. They were on the verge of calling into aid the Police Bureau.

As a last resort, to make sure the lad was not in hiding, Mr. McBride looked behind the trunk and in so doing heard what he recognized as "the noise of a sleeper," and opened the trunk. There he found Edward comfortable on a soft stack of clothes.

The lad explained that he was tired and merely crawled into the trunk for a snooze.

BULLET DROPS FROM EAR.

Thirteen years ago Corey Hill, aged fifty-five, was shot by a Madison County, Ga., citizen. The ball from a rifle struck Hill in the ear and penetrated, it is believed by physicians, the brain or its lining. The injured man was unconscious for some time, but rallied and almost recovered, though the bullet never was removed. A few days ago the ball dropped out of the ear it had entered. Hill suffered after the wound with partial loss of vision of the left eye, and never recovered ability to focus the eyes, the ball evidently cutting the fibres inclosing the eye nerves. He suffered at times from slight headaches and dizziness. Lately the ear became inflamed. Then the bullet, imbedded in the skull for more than a dozen years, worked its way to the orifice of the ear and dropped out.

LOSSES THROUGH LACK OF BIRDS.

Scientists have determined by careful computation, study and investigation that the farmers and fruit growers over this country are losing over \$1,000,000,000 a year by reason of the reckless and sense-

less destruction of birds during the past thirty years, says Colonel G. O. Shields.

The cotton growers of the South are suffering a loss of \$100,000,000 a year by reason of the ravages of the boll weevil, an insect that bores into the cotton stalk and kills it. Why? Because the quails, prairie chickens, meadow larks and other birds, which were formerly there in millions, have been swept away by thoughtless, reckless men and boys.

The grain growers are losing over \$100,000,000 a year on account of the work of the chinch bug. They are losing another \$200,000,000 a year on account of the work of the Hessian fly. Both of these are very small insects, almost microscopic in size. It takes 24,000 chinch bugs to weigh an ounce, and nearly 50,000 Hessian flies to weigh an ounce.

Scientific men announce that there is no way on earth by which these insects can be destroyed except for the people to stop the killing of birds, absolutely and at all times, and let them come back and take care of the insects.

MORTGAGES MADE HER RICH.

"Somewhere in France" there is an elderly woman who is living in as much comfort as war times allow, on the proceeds of a neat little fortune amassed while in domestic service in the United States.

Thirty-seven years ago this old lady, whose name is Celeste, came to America and became a servant in a Baltimore family, says the *Straus Investors Magazine* for August. She learned the language and the customs of the country, but she brought with her something she did not have to learn—the habit of saving and investing money.

With typical French thrift she laid by a little sum each week out of her wages. In the course of several years this amounted to a few hundred dollars. Her employer being a banker, she asked him with some trepidation to find her a safe mortgage—for the French seem to take by instinct to investments based on the land. He did so. A mortgage in those days produced 7 per cent. As her interest was paid she laid it by. She saved more and more and at the end of two years she purchased another mortgage. When ten years had gone by she had more than \$1,500 out at interest.

As years went on she found that she was unable to get 7 per cent., but was perfectly content with 6 per cent. Shortly before the war broke out, after thirty-five years of service in the same family, she found that she had to her credit more than \$10,000. Being now advanced in years, she determined to return to la patrie, taking with her \$10,000, which she invested in bonds of the Credit Foncier, the great French mortgage bank which issues bonds based on first mortgages on real estate.

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